

THE



ENCYCLOPEDIA

JONATHAN SNOWDEN & KENDALL SHIELDS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER LOCKLEY

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ECW Press

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Introduction

On its surface, mixed martial arts is a simple game. There's something universal about fighting, after all. And when two combatants square off inside a cage in a brutal contest that leaves one man standing and the other unwilling or unable to continue, audiences connect on a visceral, primal level, not an intellectual one. So why, you might ask, is this book necessary?

Because, as simple as the concept of mixed martial arts may be, the execution is infinitely complex. Take the fistic repertoire of traditional western boxing and add to that the precise savagery of Muay Thai kickboxing, the explosive athleticism of collegiate and international wrestling, the dynamic grappling techniques of judo and sambo, and the methodical submission fighting of the world's top Brazilian Jiu-jitsu stylists. These diverse disciplines, each one complex enough to warrant a lifetime of study on its own, now regularly collide, with fascinating results, at MMA events the world over.

With *The MMA Encyclopedia* we hope to provide some insight into the techniques, styles, and tactics on display in the cage, as well as shed light upon the fighters and promotions that have helped make MMA one of the fastest growing sports in the world. Along the way, many of the sport's luminaries tell their own stories under the heading "In Their Own Words." The entries are arranged alphabetically, and when we make reference to a topic addressed elsewhere in the encyclopedia, the subject appears in bold type. As you'll see, the world of mixed martial arts is deeply interconnected.

Peter Lockley has provided some of his top notch photography to illustrate the book, and Chris "Mookie" Harrington helped put together the appendices: a complete look at the results from every major fight show in both America and Japan as well as a collection of interesting miscellany. We hope you'll agree that these combined efforts have yielded the best overall picture of the mixed martial arts industry ever put to press.



Abbott, David

Nickname: Tank

Height: 6'

Weight: 285 lbs

Born: 4/16/65

Debut: UFC 6 (7/14/95)

Career Record: 10-14

Notable Wins: Paul Varelans (UFC 6); Yoji Anjo (UFC 15.5); Wesley "Cabbage" Correia (ROTR 7)

Notable Losses: Oleg Taktarov (UFC 6); Dan Severn (Ultimate Ultimate 95); Don Frye (Ultimate Ultimate 96); Pedro Rizzo (UFC 17.5); Kevin "Kimbo Slice" Ferguson (EliteXC: Street Certified)

It wasn't the brutal knockout of the 400-pound **John Matua** that made David "Tank" Abbott stand out in a crowded MMA landscape. It was the dance — just a little shimmy mimicking Matua's scary convulsions as he lay unconscious on the mat — that immediately made Abbott one of the **UFC's** biggest stars.

Before Abbott burst onto the scene in 1995 at UFC 6, the UFC was filled with respectful athletes, martial artists who conducted themselves with class and dignity. With his crass interviews, often mocking his opponents and making light of the trauma he had just inflicted on their brains with his hammering fists, Abbott was a breath of fresh air. He was the anti-martial artist, a welcoming and familiar figure



for fans who still weren't sure what to make of **Gracie Jiu-jitsu** and the ground game. This was a fighter they could feel comfortable with: a bar fighter with a bald head, barrel chest, and long beard. This was what a fighter was supposed to look like.

"I just got out of jail for beating somebody up — in fact, a cop's son," Abbott said. His background gave UFC promoters reason to worry. But Abbott had a solid case for his inclusion in the event. "Isn't this supposed to be about fighting? And they said, 'Yeah, but you've got to have some kind of a black belt or something.' And I said, 'That's not what I'm about. I'm about fighting in the streets.' They called me a couple days later and said, 'We came up with this thing called Tank Abbott. It's from the *Every Which Way But Loose* movie from Clint Eastwood.' That's where the Tank came from."

It was a brilliant marketing ploy, not just by Semaphore Entertainment Group, but by Abbott himself. The Tank may have looked like an ignorant thug, but that was for show. He was a legitimately tough guy, but he was also a college graduate and a junior college wrestling star. This wasn't part of the UFC's pitch, though. Fans preferred to think of Abbott as a menacing street fighter and that was what SEG gave them.

Unfortunately for Abbott, the martial artists he professed to hate so much were more than a match for him. Abbott's career is filled with devastating knockouts of journeymen and tomato cans, but every time he stood in the cage with a legitimate martial artist, he lost and lost convincingly. Even in defeat, Tank was still able to convince fans he was the tougher guy. He was famous for heading to the bar while his conqueror headed to the hospital.

It was an act that seemed to age poorly. If tapping out to a sneering **Frank Mir's toe hold** didn't kill the Abbott myth, a first round knockout in just 43 seconds at the hands of street fighter **Kimbo Slice** surely did. Despite these convincing losses, Abbott will continue to fight on. As long as there are promoters who are willing to pay big bucks for the nostalgia of having Tank Abbott on their cards, the Tank will be there, lacing up his gloves and ready to fall down for old time's sake.

■ **Tank Abbott: Wrestling Star**

During his UFC run, Tank Abbott's biggest nemesis was the promotion's pretty boy **Ken Shamrock**. One SEG insider thought of Shamrock's **Lion's Den** and Abbott's crew as the Sharks and the Jets. Like the gangs in *West Side Story*, the two crews seemed destined to rumble. Instead, the fireworks were all verbal, especially after Shamrock left fighting for **professional wrestling**. Abbott mocked him mercilessly, but as the UFC paychecks got smaller, Abbott's oppo-

sition to pro wrestling shrank as well. In 1999, Abbott took the leap with Time Warner's World Championship Wrestling.

He joined the promotion in a tumultuous time. WCW had peaked with an evil Hulk Hogan leading his New World Order stable against aging good guys like Sting and Ric Flair. They were desperate for the next big thing and were tossing ideas against the wall with reckless abandon. Abbott was far from the only experiment; WCW also brought in KISS to help christen a KISS Demon character and signed the rapper Master P to headline a rap versus country music feud.

In this creative chasm, Abbott's wrestling persona changed by the day. He was a tough guy with one-punch-knockout power during a "Colors on a Pole" match with Big Al at one pay-per-view and the goofy dancing bodyguard for the boy-band knockoff "3 Count" at another show.

"The powers that be in WCW were changing every day; you never knew who was in charge. They just came up with new ideas and things for me to do. I think they were hoping it wouldn't go well for me," Abbott said. "I thought it was actually kind of funny to go out and dance with those guys. What the hell – let's go have some fun."

Achilles hold: see **Leg locks**

ADCC

The Abu Dhabi Combat Club Submission Wrestling World Championship — more often referred to as ADCC, or simply Abu Dhabi — is the most prestigious competition in the world of no-gi submission grappling. Founded by MMA enthusiast Sheik Tahnoon Bin Zayed Al Nahyan and his **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** instructor Nelson Monteiro in 1998, the ADCC's mandate is to bring grapplers from various disciplines together to compete under rules agreeable to competitors from all styles — though ADCC rules resemble those of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu more closely than those of any other art or sport. And indeed, Brazilian Jiu-jitsu practitioners have enjoyed far more success at ADCC than representatives of **sambo**, **judo**, or **wrestling**. Aside from **Mark Kerr** and **Sanae Kikuta**, representing wrestling and judo respectively, all ADCC champions have been top Brazilian Jiu-jitsu exponents. This is no doubt due to at least two factors: the undeniable, inherent quality of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu as the premier submission discipline of its era, and the fact that the ADCC is simply not on the radar of active elite wrestlers and judo players. Perhaps one day Sheik Tahnoon's dream of top athletes from every major grappling discipline competing under a common rule set will be fully realized. Until then, it is

In Their Own Words: Matt Hume on ADCC

"Sheik Tahnoun saw me defeat Kenny Monday in the first world submission wrestling championship called 'The Contenders.' At the time, he was training in Brazilian Jiu-jitsu with Nelson Montero. He had seen Gracie Jiu-jitsu defeat all comers in the early **UFCs**, but started to see wrestlers come in and have success over some of the good jiu-jitsu practitioners. Then he saw me defeat the most decorated wrestler in only 45 seconds! He had his assistant contact me and I went to Abu Dhabi to train him and his combat team. Shortly after I taught him, he decided to hold the first Abu Dhabi submission championships and the rest is history.

"Training Sheik Tahnoun and his combat team was a great experience. He is a true martial artist and always seeks to improve his technique and ability. Everyone that I met in Abu Dhabi was very nice and had a true interest in learning what I taught them. I went back on several occasions and it was always like a reunion with good friends and family. I feel very fortunate to have had that opportunity and to have them as friends today."

what it is: a slightly dry but intriguing tournament featuring many of the biggest names in Brazilian Jiu-jitsu and MMA.

Affliction

It might be best to think of the Affliction clothing company's foray into the world of mixed martial arts as a noble failure. Backed, at least nominally, by Donald Trump, and partnered with Oscar De La Hoya's powerhouse Golden Boy Promotions, Affliction Entertainment put together two stacked, genuinely entertaining shows before falling apart days before their much anticipated Trilogy event in the summer of 2009. The premise was simple, and almost irresistible: take the Affliction brand, which enjoyed enormous success among the demographic that underpinned the popularity of mixed martial arts, partner it with the best heavyweight fighter on the planet, **Fedor Emelianenko**, and watch the money pile up. It didn't quite work out that way, in part because of a lack of proven draws on the top of the card and in part because of the hefty salaries paid out to the likes of **Tim Sylvia**, **Josh Barnett**, **Andrei Arlovski**, **Matt Lindland**, and **Vitor Belfort** — all admirable and accomplished fighters, but none of them capable of pulling in the kind of pay-per-view numbers needed to keep things viable.

By the summer of 2009, there were rumors and rumblings that the end might be in sight, and once Barnett failed a pre-fight drug test — the third pos-

itive test for a banned steroid of his career — Affliction’s third event collapsed, and the promotion itself followed suit not long thereafter. A partnership with **Strikeforce** was considered but never consolidated, forcing Affliction to turn to **Dana White**. The **UFC**, which had banned Affliction clothing when word first began to spread that the company was considering running its own events, absorbed several fighters’ contracts and welcomed the clothing company back as a sponsor. In the end, the Affliction affair showed that while there are some intriguing synergies between mixed martial arts and elaborately goony sportswear, success in one doesn’t necessarily guarantee success in the other.

Akebono

Real Name: Chad Rowan

Height: 6’8”

Weight: 500 lbs

Born: 5/8/69

Debut: Dynamite!! (12/31/04)

Career Record: 0-4

Notable Losses: Royce Gracie (Dynamite!! 2004); Don Frye (Hero’s 5)

The Japanese sumo fans were more disappointed than angry when it turned out Chad Rowan just didn’t get it. They had embraced Rowan as “Akebono,” the first foreigner ever promoted to the exalted rank of yokozuna. He was among the most successful sumo of his era, winning 11 top division championships, and the notoriously xenophobic Japanese adopted him as one of their own. He even represented his new homeland at the 1998 Winter Olympics opening ceremonies in Nagano.

Then came retirement. Although he was given a job training the next generation of wrestlers, it wasn’t easy navigating the extremely political world of the sumo. It seems strange to many foreigners, but in Japan, a long-term position of authority in sumo isn’t earned — it’s bought and paid for by the athletes and their wealthy fans and sponsors. Akebono was on that path, an apprentice stable-master vying for one of a very few positions as head of a stable. The cost of that position, because of its scarcity, could exceed \$2 million and Akebono had lost all his financial backing. In Japan, sumo are held to higher standards than other athletes, and Akebono had disappointed his richest backers by dumping his long-time Japanese girlfriend and marrying a Japanese-American only after he had impregnated her.

Despite their status in the country, top sumo were more wealthy than rich. They did well, earning as much as \$500,000 a year, but Akebono had expensive tastes and was struggling. He hadn’t made enough to live comfortably in retirement and he had lost his opportunity to make a lifelong living in sumo. When the restaurant he purchased failed, he felt he had little choice but



to go out on his own. Consequently, one of the top men in a very traditional sport joined the loud and flashy K-1 kickboxing show. He may have abandoned years of tradition, but he didn't come cheap: Akebono's salary for a K-1 fight was more than \$1 million.

In the ring, whether it was kickboxing or MMA, watching Akebono fight was a little like watching Michael Jordan play baseball. It was sad to watch a true great struggle at a new game, every embarrassing loss destroying his legacy a little more. Although he never found success at this new sport, fans were more than happy to tune in and watch the spectacle. His 2003 fight with fellow giant **Bob Sapp** attracted more than 50 million television viewers in a country of just over 120 million people. Almost half the country tuned in to see the former giant become just a little smaller, if not in size then in stature.

Akiyama, Yoshihiro

Nickname: Sexiyama

Weight: 185 lbs

Debut: Dynamite!! 2004 (12/31/04)

Height: 5'10"

Born: 7/29/75

Career Record: 13-2-2

Notable Wins: Melvin Manhoef (Hero's 7); Denis Kang (Hero's 2007)

Notable No Contests: Kazushi Sakuraba (Dynamite!! 2006); Kazuo Masaki (Yarennoka)

Notable Loss: Chris Leben (UFC 116)

Top middleweight Yoshihiro Akiyama's notoriety as a fighter is surpassed only by his reputation as a cheater.

Akiyama's reputation for foul play began during his international **judo** career, where his World Championship trials win in 2002 and fifth-place finish at the 2003 Osaka World Championships were clouded by credible allegations and formal protests over the slipperiness of his **gi**. The reputation was cemented when Akiyama was disqualified and a no contest was declared in his high-profile New Year's Eve bout against MMA legend **Kazushi Sakuraba**. Sakuraba, unable to secure a grip, complained vociferously to the referee throughout the brief, lopsided fight, but was ignored.

A subsequent investigation by K-1 officials revealed that Akiyama had entered the ring covered in a layer of Olay Body Quench lotion. He pleaded ignorance of the foul, and although it's possible that Akiyama was using the lotion to replenish moisture for naturally radiant skin, it seems far more likely that this was a deliberate if unnecessary act aimed at improving his already excellent chances against the fading Sakuraba.

Before the Sakuraba scandal, Akiyama was a Japanese crowd favorite. Afterward, he was a disgraced, hated villain — but also the **Hero's/Dream** organization's biggest television ratings draw. While the Japanese fans love to hate him, Koreans, it seems, simply love him. Though Japanese-born and naturalized, Akiyama (Choi Sung-Ho) is ethnically Korean and a mainstream celebrity in that country, where audiences focus less on his questionable sportsmanship and more on his dandyish fashion sense and smooth pop crooning.

Akiyama's last significant fight in Japan was his heated New Year's Eve 2007 contest against **Kazuo Masaki** in front of an uncommonly energized Saitama crowd. What looked like a decisive KO loss for Akiyama — the first since an early bout with heavyweight kickboxer Jerome LeBanner — was later ruled a no contest when Masaki's head kick was shown to have landed while Akiyama was on all fours. No longer content to play the villain at home, Akiyama made a solid American debut at **UFC 100**, taking Fight of the Night honors for his split decision win over Alan Belcher and becoming something of a cult hero as the irresistible "Sexiyama."

Aldo, Jose

Nickname: Junior

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 145 lbs

Born: 9/9/86

Debut: EcoFight 1 (8/10/04)

Career Record: 17-1

Notable Wins: Alexandre Nogueira (WEC 34); Mike Brown (WEC 44); Urijah Faber (WEC 48)

Notable Loss: Luciano Azevedo (Jungle Fight 5)

WEC featherweight champion Jose Aldo exploded from obscurity to become, at just 23 years of age, one of the youngest men ever to win a major MMA championship.

The dynamic young striker looks up to boxer Mike Tyson and there is something Tyson-esque about the Amazonian warrior. Boxing fans in the '80s could never forget the young heavyweight from Queens who won his first 17 fights by knockout. Aldo has been on a similar streak since joining the WEC. Starting with former **Shooto** standout **Alexandre Nogueira**, he's dispatched of six consecutive opponents, the last being champion **Mike Brown**.

When confined to the world of MMA, the fighter Aldo most resembles is the young **Vitor Belfort**. "The Phenom" entered the **UFC** Octagon in the early days with blazing hands and furious power. It was only later that opponents and fans would find out his heart would often wilt when the going got tough. So far no one has been able to put Aldo to the test. More than half of his fights have ended in the first round. How well he is prepared to go into the championship rounds could be the difference in whether he is a flash in the pan or a future legend.

Alessio, John

Nickname: The Natural

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 7/5/79

Debut: Ultimate Battle (5/17/98)

Career Record: 28-13

Notable Wins: Chris Brennan (KOTC 15); Ronald Jhun (KOTC 29); War Machine (TPF 5)

Notable Losses: Pat Miletich (UFC 26); Jason Black (UCC 12); Diego Sanchez (UFC 60); Thiago Alves (UFC: The Final Chapter)

John Alessio picks things up quickly. Whether it's a backward steamroller on his BMX bike, or an **arm bar** from guard, Alessio is a fast learner. He was good enough on his bike to win the Nationals for trick biking twice, but he set his sights on MMA competition instead. He decided early that he wanted to be a pro fighter, moving from Vancouver, BC, in Canada to California so he could train at the infamous Shark Tank with Eddy Millis. He was just 19.

When it came to the ground game, Alessio really was a natural. His ground game steadily improved and he won a four-man tournament at

SuperBrawl 16 to earn a shot at the **UFC**. When he fought **Pat Miletich** in the semi-main event at **UFC 26** for the **UFC** lightweight title, he was just 20 years old. Miletich submitted him in the second round, but the scrappy Alessio put up a solid fight.

It became the story of his career. Alessio dispatched lesser opponents with relative ease. But when he stood across the cage from bigger name fighters, he was never able to reach inside for that will to win. He lost fights to **Diego Sanchez**, **Thiago Alves**, Joe Doerkson, Jason Black, Jonathan Goulet, Carlos Condit, Paul Daley, and Brock Larson. It will be his legacy: too good for average fighters and just good enough to make a good fighter look bad.

Alvarez, Eddie

Nickname: The Silent Assassin

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 1/11/84

Debut: Ring of Combat 5 (12/14/03)

Career Record: 20-2

Notable Wins: Joachim Hansen (Dream 3); Tatsuya Kawajiri (Dream 4)

Notable Losses: Nick Thompson (BodogFight: Clash of the Nations); Shinya Aoki (Dynamite!! 2008)

Taking fights for assorted minor promotions in the U.S., Canada, Japan, and Russia, Eddie Alvarez built a reputation as a tough up-and-coming welterweight and amassed an impressive 13-1 record to start his career. But it was as a lightweight fighting in **Dream**, Japan's foremost organization, that Alvarez made the MMA world take notice. After putting on a fight of the year-caliber bout against the fierce **Joachim Hansen** in the quarter-final of the Dream Lightweight Grand Prix, Alvarez proved his first win over first-rate competition was no fluke by stopping the heavy-handed **Tatsuya Kawajiri** in the next round. Although an eye injury kept him from the tournament final, it was clear that Eddie Alvarez had arrived. A much-anticipated New Year's Eve bout with top Dream star **Shinya Aoki** for the WAMMA lightweight title fell short of expectations, however, when Alvarez was caught in a **heel hook** early in the first round. After his success in Dream's Grand Prix, Alvarez tried his luck in the upstart **Bellator** promotion's lightweight tournament. Unsurprisingly, Alvarez breezed through the competition to become Bellator's first lightweight champion. It wasn't Alvarez's first title — he'd held the Maximum Fighting Challenge/BodogFight welterweight championship before dropping down — and given his proven ability to hang with the best in the world at 155 pounds, it's unlikely that it will be his last.

Alves, Thiago

Nickname: The Pit Bull

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 10/3/83

Debut: Champions Night 2 (6/30/01)

Career Record: 17-6

Notable Wins: Karo Parisyan (*Ultimate Fight Night* 13); Matt Hughes (UFC 85); Josh Koscheck (UFC 90)

Notable Losses: Spencer Fisher (*Ultimate Fight Night* 2); Jon Fitch (*Ultimate Fight Night* 5); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 100); John Fitch (UFC 117)

Today the fight world knows Thiago Alves as a powerful striker who can finish his opponents with dynamic blows. He throws **Muay Thai** knees, punches, and kicks with equal aplomb. In 2006, however, Thiago Alves was on his way to being cut by the **UFC**. He had lost two of his first four fights, including two decisive losses to Spencer Fisher and **Jon Fitch**. Then Alves got big. Real big. Going in to welterweight fights at 200 pounds is a significant advantage and Alves routinely had ten pounds on his opponents going into the fight. While everyone cut weight, no one did it quite as well as Alves. Coincidentally, Alves hasn't lost since, running together a seven-fight win string.

In Their Own Words: Thiago Alves on cutting weight

"Usually I'm waking up around 191, 192; you know that's normal for me right now, it's always – actually that's pretty good for me right now but I think on the day of the fight I'll be around 190, 195, something like that.

"The cutting weight thing, it's never an easy thing to do. . . . Nobody likes to lose weight, especially like drain yourself, you know, dehydrate yourself, but it's part of the game. You know you have to do it. . . . It's not a mystery and it's not a thing that you never done before. You know every time you fight it has to go through those things. You know, so you know if you do it right you're going to perform as well. You know if you don't, it's your fault; it's your mistake. You're not going to perform very well. So it is what it is.

"I mean, we're going to weigh in the same way. You know we're both going to have to weigh 170. . . . I don't think the size advantage at this point, at this level, is going to count much. I'm not counting on that, you know; I'm just counting on my training and everything that I know and everything that I've been through, you know, all the struggle that I've been through in my life and I'm just going to let it go."

Cutting that much weight isn't always easy. At UFC 66 Alves was caught doping, busted by the Nevada State Athletic Commission for using a diuretic, Spironolactone. He was suspended for eight months and paid a \$5,500 fine. Upon his return, Alves continued to shine. He impressed hard-core fans with his strong standup, out-striking the free-swinging Chris Lytle and the judoka **Karo Parisyan**.

The Parisyan win proclaimed Alves a legitimate prospect. His next fight provided a chance to climb yet another rung on the ladder. After several fights fell through, Alves and **Matt Hughes** agreed to fight in the main event of UFC 85 on short notice. For Hughes, the tables were turning. Just two years earlier he had been the young gun making his name off the legendary **Royce Gracie**. Now he was the veteran legend that the young prospect, Alves, was looking to put out to pasture.

Alves came into the fight much bigger than Hughes. Unfortunately, he also came into the fight four pounds heavier than the 170-pound weight limit. No one can say for certain if the additional weight helped, but Alves manhandled the legend. Hughes couldn't take him down and Alves dropped him with a thunderous left knee.

Alves's takedown defense was no fluke. He outwrestled former NCAA **wrestling** champion **Josh Koscheck** in his next fight and destroyed him with powerful leg kicks. The Koscheck win took Alves to the top of the pecking order. He was ready to step into the cage with world champion **Georges St. Pierre**. He wasn't ready, however, for the Canadian's unstoppable takedowns. Alves spent much of the fight on his back, looking up at the man who entered the Octagon as champion that night and left it the same way.

Americana: See **Kimura** and **Americana**

American Top Team

Coconut Creek, Florida's American Top Team (ATT) was founded in 2003 by two prominent members of **Brazilian Top Team**, Ricardo Liborio and **Marcus Silveira**. Since then, it has produced or become home to a truly remarkable roster of champions and contenders: **Thiago Alves**, **Gesias Cavalcante**, Thiago Silva, **Jeff Monson**, **Antonio Silva**, **Denis Kang**, and **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** living legend **Marcelo Garcia** are but the tip of the iceberg. Recently, however, ATT has drawn criticism for its promotional alliance with the Martial Arts Industry Association. ATT franchises out its respected name through the MAIA to "Certified Level 1 American Top Team Instructors," who participate in a \$3,500 three-day seminar followed by monthly payments totaling \$4,200 in the first year. Andre



Benkei, a respected coach, left ATT over the scheme in 2008, and told *Tatame* magazine the gym had turned into “a big McDonald’s.” He criticized team leaders for “selling our work to people that take advantage of our name and never went to ATT — owners of **karate** gyms that simply do a seminar and now have a right to teach MMA with ATT’s name.” Only time will tell whether this controversial program will dilute the name of one of the top fight teams in the country. In the meantime, expect American Top Team fighters to either hold or challenge for the sport’s top titles on a regular basis.

Anaconda choke: see **Arm triangle**

Anjo, Yoji

Nickname: Mr. 200 Percent

Height: 5’10”

Weight: 200 lbs

Born: 12/31/69

Debut: U-Japan (11/17/96)

Career Record: 0-5-1

Notable Losses: Tank Abbott (UFC 15.5); Matt Lindland (UFC 29); Ryan Gracie (Pride Shockwave 2004)

As a fighter, Yoji Anjo was completely forgettable. Like other Japanese pro wrestlers before and since, he got by on a combination of heart and chutzpah. Anjo was undeniably tough: even the routinely disrespectful **Tank Abbott** made a point of noting Anjo's never-quit fighting spirit. Still, his MMA career was completely unremarkable, except for an incident in 1994 that helped make **Rickson Gracie** a star in Japan.

Anjo was the toughest wrestler in the shoot-style UWFi. The promotion had drawn huge crowds to see the toughest of the tough. Despite the group's great success, UWFi booker Yuki Miyato could feel that the game was almost up. His pro wrestlers had convinced a nation that they were the baddest men on the planet, but the advent of **Pancrase**, the **UFC**, and now **Vale Tudo** Japan was starting to make that illusion a tougher sell to the Japanese populace.

After failing to sign Rickson to a pro **wrestling** match, he sent his toughest guy, mid-carder Yoji Anjo, to challenge Rickson to a fight on December 7, 1994 — Pearl Harbor Day. They expected that Rickson would decline the impromptu fight, or that Anjo would beat him. Either way, they would return to Japan with a public relations victory. They didn't know Rickson.

He got the call that a Japanese wrestler was at his Los Angeles dojo with the media in tow when he was home with his family. They all went to see what was happening and Anjo called Rickson a coward in front of his entire family and his students. The fight was on. It started quickly. Asked if he needed time to get ready, Rickson replied, "I was born ready, motherfucker." Instead of a gentle demonstration of jiu-jitsu, Gracie brutalized Anjo. The fight took place behind closed doors at the dojo, but witnesses say Gracie got the **mount** position and rained down punch after punch on the helpless wrestler's face. The pictures that surfaced in the Japanese papers showed a man who looked like he had been in a car accident, his face turned to hamburger by Gracie's vicious assault.

The public humiliation helped speed shoot-style wrestling's inevitable demise. Anjo's failure to protect the business left his mentor **Nobuhiko Takada** no choice but to fight Gracie. The resulting match propelled MMA from a niche sport in Japan into a mainstream spectacle, making Anjo's ill-fated trip to the Gracie dojo one of the most important butt kickings of the decade.

Ankle lock: see **Leg locks**

Aoki, Shinya

Nickname: Tobikan Judan

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 161 lbs

Born: 5/9/83

Debut: Deep 15th Impact (7/3/04)

Career Record: 24-5 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Akira Kikuchi (Shooto: The Victory of the Truth); Joachim Hansen (Pride Shockwave 2006); Gesias Cavalcante (Dream 2); Caol Uno (Dream 5); Eddie Alvarez (Dynamite!! 2008)

Notable Losses: Hayato Sakurai (Shooto: Alive Road); Joachim Hansen (Dream 5); Hayato Sakurai (Dream 8)

Nicknamed “Tobikan Judan” (“tenth degree master of flying locks”) for his propensity for spectacular submissions, Shinya Aoki became the centerpiece of Japan’s **Dream** promotion following successful stints in **Shooto** and **Pride FC**, and was recognized December 31, 2008, as the first WAMMA Undisputed World Lightweight Champion. At a time when mixed martial arts came to be defined by the balanced, versatile fighter skilled in all aspects of the game, Aoki managed to succeed on the strength of his submission grappling alone.

A ne waza (ground fighting)–focused collegiate **judo** player turned **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** exponent, Aoki opened his MMA career with an unremarkable two-fight stint in **Deep**, but began turning heads immediately upon arrival in Shooto, winning his debut bout with a devastating standing arm lock rarely seen in MMA: a controversial wakigatame that broke Keith Wisniewski’s arm at the elbow in an instant. A competitive loss to **Hayato Sakurai** and a solid decision win over **Akira Kikuchi** to claim Shooto’s middleweight (167 pounds) championship solidified Aoki’s reputation among hard-core fans, but it was in his Pride Bushido debut that Aoki truly began to make his mark. The quick submission win by triangle choke over Jason Black answered any questions about Aoki’s ability to perform on a bigger stage, but left us with a more burning question: where did Aoki get those remarkable pants? Aoki’s colorful compression tights, which improve grip as well as fabulousness, quickly became as important to the Aoki package as his inescapable rubber guard and dynamic “Baka Survivor” ring entrance.

A win using the rare **gogoplata** over perennial contender **Joachim Hansen** at Pride’s 2006 Shockwave event positioned Aoki as the sport’s premier submission fighter and helped raise his profile to the point that, on New Year’s Eve, 2007, his bout against Korean Olympic medalist Jung Bu-Kyung closed the one-off Yarennoka! event. In 2008, Aoki signed on as one of the key players in Fighting Entertainment Group’s nascent Dream promotion, but his reputation suffered following his Dream 1 main event against **Gesias “JZ” Cavalcante**. In that bout Aoki chose not to continue, following elbow strikes to the back of the neck, which were ruled illegal but did not appear to be a serious foul to most observers. A dominant performance against Cavalcante in a rematch, as well as

subsequent wins over **Caol Uno** and **Eddie Alvarez**, helped to cement Aoki's status among the premier lightweight fighters in the world, but ground-and-pound TKO losses in rematches with Joachim Hansen and Hayato Sakurai kept him from a legitimate claim to **B.J. Penn's** top spot.

■ **Shinya Aoki's Spectacular Submissions**

For many fans, the definition of a great fight is two men standing and trading blows, setting their feet and unloading bombs worthy of a Rocky movie, come what may. By that definition, Shinya Aoki has never had a great fight. He's never even had a good one. Aoki seems to dislike throwing punches almost as much as he dislikes receiving them – which is plenty. But for aficionados of the submission game, there's nobody quite like him. Every time Aoki steps into the ring, there's a very real chance you're going to see something you've never seen before, something you might not even have thought possible. From a career filled with memorable submission finishes, here are his five best.

5. vs. David Gardner (4/5/09), rear naked choke

Journeyman David Gardner came to Saitama, Japan, with only the slimmest chance at victory, and everybody knew it – even, apparently, Gardner himself, who couldn't bring himself to take the fight seriously. As expected, Aoki was dominant and completely controlled the fight on the ground. When Gardner found himself on the wrong end of yet another back **mount**, he decided to try a novel escape: waving to the crowd, he shouted out, "Hello, Japan!" Aoki wasted no time sinking the rear naked choke for the win in one of the strangest finishes in MMA history.

4. vs. Katsuhiko Nagata (6/15/08), mounted gogoplata

An Olympic silver medalist in Greco-Roman wrestling, Katsuhiko Nagata didn't come short on credentials. He did, however, come short on submission defense, which made him easy prey for the Tobikan Judan. Aoki took Nagata down with ease (no mean feat), mounted, and wound his right leg around Nagata's left arm, forcing his shin across Nagata's throat to earn the tap out and the win with a technique few had seen before. After some initial confusion concerning nomenclature (an **omoplata** from the top? a locoplata?), a consensus emerged. Aoki had finished with a mounted gogoplata, of all things.

3. vs. Eddie Alvarez (12/31/08), heel hook

Gardner and Nagata were ready-made opponents, blank canvases for a submission artist like Aoki. But the hard-hitting and versatile Eddie Alvarez came

into his bout with Aoki as one of the most dangerous lightweight fighters on the planet. Consecutive wins over the rock-solid **Tatsuya Kawajiri** and **Joachim Hansen**, and a 15-1 record over all meant Alvarez was for real. Aoki looked like he was in trouble when his game plan of butt scooting followed by even more butt scooting failed to yield early returns, but no matter. After an impressive hip throw from Alvarez and a deft scramble from Aoki, the match ended in a mere 1:38, with Alvarez screaming in obvious pain from a notoriously dangerous hold.

2. vs. Joachim Hansen (12/31/06), gogoplata

It's one thing to pull off a picture-perfect gogoplata finish on a network-televised New Year's Eve card, the biggest stage in the Japanese fight game. It's another to do so against the tough and savvy Joachim Hansen. But Aoki dominated their brief contest from start to finish, taking the Norwegian down at will, wrapping Hansen up in an inescapable rubber **guard**, and driving his shin forcefully across Hansen's throat for the textbook submission. Although Hansen would even the score in their eventual rematch, Aoki's dissection of Hansen on the ground in their first encounter remains some of the slickest guard work ever seen in MMA.

1. vs. Keith Wisniewski (1/29/05), waki gatame

This is a fight that's hard to watch twice. Once you know that the bout is going to end with Wisniewski's arm audibly snapped at the elbow from a standing side arm lock applied so suddenly that surrender is completely impossible, you can't unknow it. And you can't help but cringe as the moment approaches. Aoki's application of this technique to the point of swift and nauseating fracture was controversial, but Aoki reminded us of an important point: fundamentally, joint locks aren't about compelling your opponent to tap; they're about breaking the joint. If your opponent taps out before this happens, so much the better for him. But if he lacks either the time or the inclination, the results can be devastating – especially when Shinya Aoki is involved.

Arlovski, Andrei

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 244 lbs

Born: 2/4/79

Debut: M-1 MFC: World Championship 1999 (4/9/99)

Career Record: 15-8

Notable Wins: Vladimir Matyushenko (UFC 44); Tim Sylvia (UFC 51); Paul Buentello (UFC 55); Fabricio Werdum (UFC 70); Roy Nelson (EliteXC: Heat)

Notable Losses: Ricco Rodriguez (UFC 32); Pedro Rizzo (UFC 36); Tim Sylvia (UFC 59, UFC 61); Fedor Emelianenko (Affliction: Day of Reckoning)

Twice in his career, perennial top-ten heavyweight Andrei Arlovski has seemed on the cusp of greatness. And twice, he's fallen short.

In 2005, as the sport exploded in popularity following the success of the first season of *The Ultimate Fighter*, and with **Frank Mir** on the sidelines following a devastating motorcycle accident, Arlovski was poised atop the heavyweight division, having just won the UFC interim heavyweight title over **Tim Sylvia** by Achilles lock in less than a minute. A young, charismatic fighter with fast hands, quick feet, and slick **leg locks**, Arlovski could have become the face of the heavyweight division as the sport reached new heights. But, after quick wins over Justin Eilers and the tragicomic **Paul Buentello**, and an upgrade from interim to undisputed heavyweight champion, Arlovski and Sylvia met again in another match that didn't get out of the first round. This time, though, it was Arlovski staring at the ceiling, TKO'd only moments after he'd tagged Sylvia and gone in for the kill. An immediate rematch saw Arlovski on the losing end of a dull, plodding fight that went the distance. Although Arlovski rattled off three subsequent UFC wins against quality opposition, another title shot did not materialize.

And so it was off to the greener pastures of **Affliction**, where Arlovski found another opportunity for greatness. With solid wins over two true heavyweights, Ben Rothwell and **Roy Nelson**, Arlovski earned a shot at **Fedor Emelianenko**, the consensus top heavyweight in the world. Under Freddie Roach, who has trained such boxing greats as Oscar De La Hoya, Manny Pacquiao, and Bernard Hopkins among many others, Arlovski's boxing had supposedly reached new heights. There was much pre-fight talk of Arlovski's crisp, technical boxing being too much for the unorthodox Emelianenko to



handle. Indeed, Arlovski's reach, head movement, and footwork gave Emelianenko all kinds of problems — until Fedor knocked a leaping Arlovski out cold with a massive right hand 3:14 into the first round.

Following the Emelianenko loss, and a subsequent lightning-fast beating at the hands of up-and-comer **Brett Rogers**, Arlovski's career seemed at a crossroads. Plans to pursue a future in pro boxing seem shaky given Arlovski's now very questionable chin.

Arm bar

An arm lock, usually but not exclusively applied on the ground, in which the attacker manipulates his opponent's arm such that the elbow joint is hyper-extended. Although there exists a variety of techniques that are properly classified as arm bars, the term is generally used in mixed martial arts to refer specifically to the technique known to practitioners of **judo** and **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** as *juji gatame* (cross mark hold). While there are many ways of entering the technique, the end result is the same: the attacker, perpendicular to his opponent (hence "cross mark"), controls his opponent's wrist, sits low against his opponent's shoulder, controlling his opponent's arm between his thighs. With one leg over his opponent's head, and the other either across the chest or tucked into his opponent's side, the attacker extends his opponent's arm and raises his hips to apply pressure to the elbow.

This technique can be executed with the attacker and opponent facing either up or down, and can be applied from any number of grappling positions, top or bottom. The most spectacular variation, rarely seen in modern mixed martial arts, is the flying arm bar, in which the attacker, usually gripping the arm at the bicep, leaps and throws a leg across his opponent's face, often finishing the technique face down as both fall to the mat. And surely the most spectacular flying arm bar in MMA history belongs to **Rumina Sato**, who dashed across the **Shooto** ring and finished poor Charles Taylor only six seconds into the first fight of Taylor's career. It remains perhaps the most amazing submission finish ever seen in MMA — and given the look on Taylor's face as he turned to his corner, maybe the most demoralizing career debut, too.

Arm triangle

A chokehold often, though not exclusively, executed from top position, in which the attacker positions his arms such that he traps his opponent's head and a single arm. In the most basic application, the traditional *kata gatame* (shoulder hold) found in both **judo** and **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**, the attacker generally begins in **mount** or **side control**, secures the hold either by clasping his hands together or

by gripping the bicep of his supporting arm with the hand of the strangling arm, and completes the technique by shifting his body to the side of the opponent's trapped arm. The effect is similar to the **triangle choke** performed with the legs, in that the opponent is strangled, in part, against his own shoulder.

This basic application of the arm triangle can still be seen at the sport's highest level. **Lyoto Machida** finished **Sokoudjou** at **UFC 74** with a textbook example of the technique, and Marcus Aurelio ended **Takanori Gomi's** ten-fight **Pride** winning streak with another at Bushido 10. **Kimo Leopoldo** finished **Tank Abbott** with a slow, deliberate application of the hold at **UFC 43** as the crowd booed what they saw as a lack of action. Closely related to this basic application is a standing variation, which Japanese pro wrestler **Kazuyuki Fujita** has used with some success.

When the arm triangle is performed from a front head lock position with a rolling finish to tighten the hold, it is referred to as the anaconda choke or gator roll. **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** was the first to successfully apply this variation in MMA with his **Pride** wins over Hirotoka Yokoi and **Heath Herring**; **Randy Couture** debuted the technique in the **UFC** against Mike Van Arsdale a year later.

A popular, recent arm triangle variation seen is the brabo or D'Arce (after innovative **Renzo Gracie** black belt Joe D'Arce). Some controversy exists as to whether the brabo and D'Arce are best understood as distinct techniques or merely different grips for the same basic hold, but regardless, the fundamentals remain the same: the attacker, often from inside his opponent's half **guard**, performs an arm triangle such that the opponent's raised arm is trapped against the attacker's body as the strangling arm applies pressure from underneath the opponent's neck. Kendall Grove's finish of Alan Belcher at **UFC 69** shows the possibilities for this particular application.

Arona, Ricardo

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 7/17/78

Debut: Rings: Millennium Combine 1 (4/20/00)

Career Record: 14-5

Notable Wins: Dan Henderson (**Pride 20**); Kazushi Sakuraba (**Pride Critical Countdown 2005**); Wanderlei Silva (**Pride Final Conflict 2005**)

Notable Losses: Fedor Emelianenko (Rings: **King of Kings 2000**); Quinton Jackson (**Pride Critical Countdown 2004**); Mauricio Rua (**Pride Final Conflict 2005**); Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou (**Pride 34**)

When a referee fails in his duty to protect the fighters, and a bout is allowed to go on too long, the match risks turning into the kind of bloody spectacle

we saw when Ricardo Arona overwhelmed **Kazushi Sakuraba** and pummeled him literally beyond recognition. By the time they met in 2005, the once great Sakuraba was already very much on the decline, and the bigger, stronger, younger Arona looked like the future of **Pride's** stacked middleweight (205 pounds) division.

There was every reason to believe Arona, an aggressive **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt with solid takedowns and a suffocating top game, would be a major player in the sport for years to come. He began his career with an impressive run in **Rings** that looks all the more impressive in hindsight: Arona, in his third pro fight, came as close as anyone has come to besting **Fedor Emelianenko**, losing a close decision many think he should have won. Granted, Rings' rules took away Emelianenko's most dangerous weapon, his relentless **ground and pound**, but Arona held his own with the best heavyweight in the history of the sport.

Once in Pride, Arona collected a series of decision wins that some would call tactical, others boring, over the likes of **Guy Mezger**, **Dan Henderson**, **Murilo Rua**, and even **Wanderlei Silva** at a time when "The Axe Murderer" was all but unstoppable at 205 pounds. The only blemish on Arona's Pride record was a questionable TKO off a highlight-reel slam by **Quinton Jackson** that, on closer inspection, clearly resulted from a head butt to the jaw. Five years and 14 bouts into a career fought against extraordinarily tough competition, Arona had yet to be beaten decisively.

Everything went right for Ricardo Arona until everything went wrong. On the same night he smothered Silva, Arona was outwitted, outworked, and finally stomped by Silva's **Chute Boxe** teammate **Mauricio Rua** in the finals of the 2005 middleweight Grand Prix. Defeat in a New Year's Eve rematch with Silva followed. After he looked to be back on track with solid first round win over **Alistair Overeem**, Arona suffered a shocking KO loss to **Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou** in less than two minutes while reportedly suffering the effects of Dengue fever. Inexplicably, this is the last we've seen of Arona, with the UFC showing no apparent interest in the former Pride star.



Bader, Ryan

Nickname: Darth

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 6/7/83

Debut: WFC: Desert Storm (3/31/07)

Career Record: 11-0

Notable Wins: Vinicius Magalhaes (*The Ultimate Fighter 8* Finale); Keith Jardine (UFC 110)

Ryan Bader is a pretty ordinary guy. That's a good thing sometimes. For every **Brock Lesnar**, complete with wild and out of control **pro wrestling** antics, you also need a **Rich Franklin**, a quiet and unassuming regular guy. Bader fits that bill perfectly. He looks like the tight end or fullback from everyone's high school football team — if that tight end was also a two-time Division I Wrestling All-American.

In Their Own Words: Ryan Bader on transitioning from wrestling to MMA

"The hardest for me was probably starting off on my back. In the beginning I'd rather turn my back than pull guard, you know? The other hard part for me was the stance. It's been hard to stay loose so you can do standup when you're used to being so compact. You have to loosen up or you're going to get beat up. So those are probably two of the hardest things.

"The beneficial thing I've taken from wrestling is hard work. I was in wrestling for a lot of seasons. It's grueling. I've been around hard work; I know how to work. I know how to push through things. When other people say, 'Oh my God I'm tired,' I've been there a million times before. You get through it. You know you'll feel better in a couple of minutes. Hard work, the mentality, and just the competition. So many big matches. I've been in the Pac-10 Finals four years in college; I wrestled on ESPN. I've been around the competition and the crowd."

Bader comes to the Octagon with a willingness to learn and one superlative skill. He has a hard-nosed wrestler's mentality, a work ethic that guided him through *The Ultimate Fighter* house on his way to winning the eighth season of the seminal reality show. Bader showed his growth as a fighter in the season finale, knocking out the dangerous ground fighter Vinicius Magalhaes with an overhand right. Training with the up-and-coming Arizona Combat Sports team under Todd Lally, Bader was poised to become the first *Ultimate Fighter* winner in years to make a run at championship gold.

Barnett, Josh

Nickname: The Baby-Faced Assassin **Height:** 6'3"

Weight: 255 lbs **Born:** 11/10/77

Debut: UFCF: Clash of the Titans (1/11/97)

Career Record: 26-5

Notable Wins: Dan Severn (SuperBrawl 16); Semmy Schilt (UFC 32, Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2003); Randy Couture (UFC 36); Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: 10th Anniversary Show); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Final Conflict Absolute); Pedro Rizzo (Affliction: Banned)

Notable Losses: Pedro Rizzo (UFC 30); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride 28, Pride 30, Pride Final Conflict Absolute); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Shockwave 2006)

Josh Barnett is an exceptional fighter, but in the annals of MMA, all his in-ring accomplishments will be lost in a cloud of controversy, deceit, and deception. Bluntly put, Barnett dopes.

He wants us to believe otherwise. After his first public positive test for **steroids**, following the greatest victory of his career over **Randy Couture** at **UFC 36**, Barnett and trainer **Matt Hume** cried wolf, telling the world that Barnett was not guilty. That he would be vindicated. They even hinted that it might have all been part of a grand conspiracy. Hume and Barnett wanted people to believe that the positive test was part of the UFC's dirty negotiating techniques. Immediately after the Couture win, Barnett and **Zuffa** entered into intense negotiating sessions. Barnett claimed this was why the test had come back positive. It was a shocking claim, one many people believed because of the sheer audacity of the charge. Barnett had nothing to lose. His **UFC 36** title victory over Couture was tainted, his **UFC** career in shambles, his title reign like it never happened.

What few knew at the time was that Barnett had actually failed a previous test in 2001 after a **UFC 28** fight with Bobby Hoffman. This was before the sport had an organized drug program and the Nevada Commission was essentially surveying the fighters to see if they might have a problem on their hands. Barnett had

a chance to clean himself up, but it appeared that he hadn't. Fans might have believed Barnett was innocent; those in the know suspected otherwise.

Barnett moved his career east, to a place he believed he belonged all along. In Japan he could follow his childhood dream of being a professional wrestler. He signed with the legendary **Antonio Inoki** and wrestled for New Japan Pro Wrestling, clowning around trying to pull off elaborate wrestling throws on men 70 pounds lighter in **Pancrase**, and eventually fought some of the world's best in **Pride**.

Barnett acquitted himself well in the land of the rising sun, a place that — despite its strict drug laws for regular citizens — was like the wild west for MMA fighters. Barnett and — to be fair — all his opponents too could put anything they wanted into their bodies. In this free-for-all he excelled against every fighter he faced, even taking a win off the great **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**. He beat everyone he faced bar one: **Mirko Cro Cop**. Cro Cop handed Barnett three losses, preventing him from ever earning a title shot at Pride champion **Fedor Emelianenko**.

After Pride was bought by a UFC promotion still holding a grudge for Barnett's post-UFC 36 behavior, Josh was stuck in limbo. He could find fights in Japan in an increasingly dim spotlight, but, now past 30, he wanted to face the best in the world. With all of Pride's significant fighters heading to the UFC, Barnett's long-desired match with Emelianenko seemed all but impossible. And then, as if he had been kissed by the gods, the fates began to align. UFC President **Dana White** tried to verbally bully Emelianenko into signing. White didn't count on the Russian's pride preventing him from working with a man he didn't respect, a man who had insulted him.

Fedor was a free agent, a fighter in desperate need of feature opponents. He made short work of former UFC champions **Tim Sylvia** and **Andrei Arlovski** for **Affliction**. As a former UFC champion himself, Barnett was walking around with a giant bull's-eye on his back. He was targeted for Affliction's third pay-per-view spectacular, a matchup between the men considered by many to be the two best heavyweights in the sport. Despite the slim odds of the fight ever taking place after the UFC became the dominant power in the MMA world, Barnett had exactly what he wanted: a main event fight with the world's best.

Then disaster struck. Barnett's license to fight in California had expired. When he applied to renew it, he was required to take a spot drug test. Most steroid users are fine with drug tests . . . when they know to expect them. This test, however, was several weeks before Barnett expected to pee in a bottle. He casually acquiesced and took the test, never hinting there might be a problem. Then, when the results came in, chaos reigned.

Barnett was out, and with such short notice no acceptable replacement could be found. Not only was the Affliction show canceled, but the entire fight promotion soon folded. No matter what else happens in his career, no matter the mountains he moves or champions he conquers, this is Barnett's legacy: a drug cheat and a promotion killer. Who could trust him to headline a major show again? His history was too damning to invest millions in promoting an event with his face on the poster. To American MMA promotions, Barnett was untouchable. It was a bed he made; now he has to lie in it: a potential all-time great remembered for the needles he allegedly stuck in his butt rather than for all the butt he kicked.

Baroni, Phil

Nickname: New York Bad Ass

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170-185 lbs

Born: 4/16/76

Debut: VATV 9 (8/5/00)

Career Record: 13-12

Notable Wins: Dave Menne (UFC 39); Ikuhisa Minowa (Pride Bushido 7); Ryo Chonan (Pride Bushido 8); Yuki Kondo (Pride Bushido 10)

Notable Losses: Matt Lindland (UFC 34, UFC 41); Evan Tanner (UFC 45, UFC 48); Ikuhisa Minowa (Pride Bushido 9); Frank Shamrock (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Baroni)

Phil Baroni figured out on his own what it took many professional wrestlers years to determine: the best way to create a memorable character is to take your natural personality and amplify it by ten. For Baroni, that worked wonders. In all fairness, a fighter with Baroni's credentials should be long forgotten. His win-loss record teeters right around .500. This means he's as likely to lose as he is to win. For most fighters, this level of achievement earns a ticket right out of the major leagues. Phil Baroni should have punched that ticket years ago. But because of the "New York Bad Ass" character he created, his brash and boastful alter ego, he keeps getting chance after chance.

Like **Tito Ortiz**, Baroni came into a **UFC** desperate for some personality and for a villain. With his sunglasses, his fancy robes, and his trash talk, Baroni stood out. In a world of the similar, this was a good thing. UFC fighters had previously been cut from the same cloth: respectful and bland Midwestern wrestlers and quiet Brazilian killers. Baroni, for the first time since **Tank Abbott**, broke that mold. He was loud when others were soft-spoken. He was in your face when others showed respect. And he was absolutely among the most entertaining fighters of the early **Zuffa** era.

The most memorable feud of Baroni's career was a study in contrasts. **Matt Lindland** was an Olympic silver medalist and the picture of red state values. He

was Baroni's polar opposite and the two men clashed wills as well as cultures. Lindland beat Baroni twice, but they were the kind of fights no one loses. The fights were so exciting and the storyline so compelling that both fighters came out of the confrontations bigger stars and better fighters.

Baroni had solid **wrestling** and heavy hands, but his style was very predictable. Like his training partners **Mark Coleman** and **Kevin Randleman** at the **Hammer House**, Baroni never developed his game. While other fighters continued to grow, Baroni stood still. Soon opponents were figuring him out. After four consecutive losses, Baroni was on his way out of the UFC.

Like his Hammer House brethren, Baroni rediscovered himself in the land of the rising sun. He made his **Pride** debut at Bushido 7, taking on one of Japan's most popular fighters, **Ikuhisa "The Punk" Minowa**. Before the fight, fans saw a glimpse of Baroni at his best. "I know he's a punk," Baroni said. "I know he's got a mullet, I know he wears Speedos — and I don't want him touching me."

Minowa was a grappler, but he had a flair for the dramatic. He fancied himself a pro wrestler, and his goal was always to entertain the crowd, even at the expense of winning. He stood toe-to-toe with Baroni in an epic slugfest. After a back-and-forth first round, including some surprisingly deft ground exchanges where Baroni more than held his own, both men were exhausted in their respective corners. It was only a matter of time until one of the fighters could stand no longer, and that man was Minowa. After some huge right hands, Minowa went down in the corner and, utilizing the more lenient Pride rules, Baroni used soccer kicks and stomps to finish him off. The New York Bad Ass was back.



In Their Own Words: Phil Baroni explains his disdain for Frank Shamrock

"He was armchair quarterbacking, when I was fighting the best fighters around the world, and he was sitting at home, ridiculing and talking about everybody. The guy had a lot to say. I never thought he would back it up, and I still will not believe it until we get to the ring and they lock the cage door. I thought that he was looking for a way out of this fight. I do not believe he is going to back it up. I issued a challenge. Everybody wants to fight that punk. It is not just me. He, being the so-called legend, got to pick his opponent, and he picked the wrong cat. He is getting knocked out.

"I think he is a scumbag. I am not going to hold any punches. The guy is a hypocrite. I think he is a fraud, and everyone that has ever dealt with him does not like him. I mean Javier Mendez, who was his old trainer, all the guys at AKA that I have trained with over the years, **Dana White**, UFC president, who is a personal friend of mine. Everyone I know that has dealt with the guy thinks he is a asshole. . . . Wait till he steps in with the real deal. I am the real deal, and I am going to throw punches with bad intentions at his fucking head and put him to sleep."

Now established as a serious player in Pride, Baroni took on Japan's best at 185 pounds. He beat **Ryo Chonan**, at the time the hottest fighter in Japan with consecutive wins over **Anderson Silva** and **Carlos Newton**, with a devastating combination of punches to further cement his place as a top shelf fighter. After losing a rematch to Minowa, Baroni rebounded with a quick knockout of **Pancrase** stalwart Yuki Kondo. He traded wins and losses throughout his Pride tenure, but his position seemed secure, since a Phil Baroni fight was guaranteed to be a barnburner.

Then Pride self-destructed and, like many of the other Americans, Baroni was a fighter without a home. His return to the United States was an enormous failure. Something about being on U.S. soil just didn't seem to work for him. Some speculated it was simply age, others that more rigid drug laws made it harder for Phil and others to train the way they were used to.

Whatever the reason, Baroni lost three consecutive fights — four if you include the war of words with **Frank Shamrock** before their June 2007 fight. He seemed to be simply overwhelmed by even mid-level fighters. Like a power pitcher who has lost his fastball, Baroni without a knockout punch was a sad

sight indeed. He will finish out his career in the UFC, an opponent for their rising stars, bringing plenty of sizzle but very little steak to some of their preliminary bouts.

Belfort, Vitor

Nickname: The Phenom

Height: 6'

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 1/4/77

Debut: SuperBrawl 2 (10/11/96)

Career Record: 19-8

Notable Wins: Tank Abbott (UFC 13); Wanderlei Silva (UFC 17.5); Heath Herring (Pride 14); Randy Couture (UFC 46); Matt Lindland (Affliction: Day of Reckoning); Rich Franklin (UFC 103)

Notable Losses: Randy Couture (UFC 15, UFC 49); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 5); Chuck Liddell (UFC 37.5); Tito Ortiz (UFC 51); Dan Henderson (Pride 32)

Most MMA nicknames are silly, but everyone in the **UFC** seems to be required to have one. Sometimes, in rare cases, the names really fit. **Randy Couture** really was “Captain America” and “Tank” fit **David Abbott** to a tee. It was the same way with Vitor Belfort. “The Phenom” just felt right. It was just who he was and what he was. At the age of 19, he thrust himself into the MMA scene and didn’t pause until he was at the precipice of greatness.

Belfort had the entire package the UFC had been missing before his debut. He had the looks — the kind of muscled action figure body SEG executives had longed for since they saw **Ken Shamrock** at UFC 1. And unlike Shamrock, he could also really fight. Better than that, he didn’t rely on the slower ground fighting popular with most Brazilians. He had the fastest and most powerful hands of anyone in the sport. So fast that he ended the nights of the sport’s two toughest street fighters, Tank Abbott and Scott Ferrozzo, in less than two minutes combined.

The UFC placed one more live body in front of him, to help build him up for a planned title shot against champion **Maurice Smith** at UFC Japan. Instead, Randy Couture shocked everyone by outboxing and outworking the young prodigy. Couture took Belfort down, and despite being a titular **Carlson Gracie** jiu-jitsu black belt, Belfort seemed to possess little in the way of submissions off his back. Couture beat him up standing as well, until Belfort was too tired to take anymore.

The bubble of infallibility had burst, but Belfort made a quick recovery. He blasted **Wanderlei Silva** across the cage in less than 45 seconds, landing more than 25 punches in the blink of the eye. It was his last fight in the UFC for almost four years. Like so many of the top fighters of the era, Belfort traveled



to Japan to compete for the big money in **Pride**. He did well there, winning four of five, but losing the only one that mattered: a decision to **Kazushi Sakuraba**.

When **Zuffa** bought the UFC in 2001, and more importantly, the money returned, Belfort was back. It was none too soon for the UFC. Belfort was still a hot property, because fans remembered his exciting fights inside the Octagon. Belfort was supposed to come back for the main event of the UFC's return to pay-per-view at UFC 33 against **Tito Ortiz**. When he was sidelined by an injury, Vladimir Matyushenko had to fill in, an unknown in one of the biggest fights of all time.

When Belfort was ready to fight, the UFC used him for an equally big card. **The Ultimate Fighter** was not the UFC's first opportunity to make a splash on television. They were featured prominently on Fox Sport's *Best Damn Sports Show Period*. The event was created at the last minute, with the **Robbie Lawler** and Steve Berger fight becoming the first MMA contest ever aired on cable television.

Belfort and **Chuck Liddell** were in the main event, in a number one contenders fight for the light heavyweight title. The Vitor that returned to the

UFC was a very different fighter than the one who left in 1998. He no longer seemed to have the mental ability to explode or to attack aggressively. He was cautious, more likely to wait for his moment, even using his **wrestling** ability to hold fighters down for a decision. He went the distance with Liddell, losing in a unanimous decision.

Despite a loss to Liddell, Belfort needed just one fight, a win over Marvin Eastman, to earn himself a title shot. It was a rematch with Randy Couture at UFC 46 and a chance to avenge the first loss of his career. In a bizarre finish, Belfort's glove cut Couture's eyelid in the first exchange of the fight. The fight was stopped and Belfort became the UFC light heavyweight champion.

It was a strange time for Belfort. What should have been a crowning moment was eclipsed by events in his private life. His sister Priscilla had disappeared and would later be found dead. When Belfort faced Couture in a rubber match at UFC 49, he was staring down demons. He was also staring across the cage at one of the best and smartest fighters in UFC history.

The loss sent Belfort's career into a downward spiral. He lost four of his next six fights, including a close decision to Tito Ortiz and one of the most boring fights imaginable to **Alistair Overeem**. Just when Belfort seemed finished, he found redemption with his old rival. He dropped to 185 pounds and began training with Randy Couture at Xtreme Couture in Las Vegas. Belfort found new life as a middleweight, and knocked off the highly regarded **Matt Lindland** before returning to the UFC after a four-year absence to stop **Rich Franklin** in the very first round. A career that began with such enormous promise, only to be marred by personal tragedy, looks set to end in triumph.

Bellator

Bjorn Rebney joined Gary Shaw and hosts of other boxing promoters nationwide, both big and small, by placing his bet on the future of combat sports being MMA. Rebney was one of the architects of the defunct Sugar Ray Leonard Promotions, a boxing enterprise that lost millions and ran into trouble with the law in the 1990s.

His MMA project, Bellator (the Latin word for warrior), seemed to be off to a better start. The promotion targeted a niche market in the MMA game: the Hispanic fight fan. A dominant force in boxing, the audience that made Oscar De La Hoya, Julio Cesar Chavez, and many others megastars in two countries has yet to embrace MMA. Bellator, starting with a prime spot on the Spanish language ESPN Deportes, was poised to capitalize if the market ever stood up and took notice. Hispanic stars like **Eddie Alvarez** headlined surprisingly good cards, featuring top to bottom action reminiscent of **Zuffa's WEC**.

In Their Own Words: Bjorn Rebney on how Bellator will stand out in the marketplace

"I think it's the format, the structure of the organization. We've taken the suit, the matchmaker in his shiny suit sitting behind his desk, and eliminated him from the equation. In Bellator, you will never see a guy fight his heart out, bloody and covered in sweat, [and then] have to drop to his knees and beg me for a title shot. In Bellator you win three fights in a tournament and you are either the champion or the number one ranked challenger. And every time you fight you make more money. The top contenders at 45, 55, 70, and 85 – each guy will walk away with six figures and a shot at the world title. It boils down to what fighters want. They like to fight, they like to make money, they want to be on TV, and they want a chance at a world title. And they want to be able to control it. Fighters want to control their own destiny."

After delighting fans and cash-hungry fighters with four tournaments to crown champions (with a \$100,000 cash prize to go along with the title) the promotion seemed poised for big things. Instead, they went immediately on hiatus. The company intends to promote two new seasons in 2010, on bigger and more inclusive networks, hoping to expand Bellator's audience beyond the hard-core MMA fans who happen to have a high-end cable package.

Beneteau, Dave

Nickname: Dangerous

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 250 lbs

Born: 7/16/68

Debut: UFC 5 (4/7/95)

Career Record: 6-5-1

Notable Wins: Patrick Smith (U-Japan); Carlos Baretto (UFC 15)

Notable Losses: Dan Severn (UFC 5); Oleg Taktarov (UFC 6, Ultimate Ultimate 95)

Dave Beneteau works in construction. Before that, he was briefly a criminal defense lawyer after graduating from York University's Osgoode Hall Law School in 2002. But before *that*, he slugged it out in the (almost) anything-goes era of the Ultimate Fighting Championship. Beneteau, a big, powerful wrestler, was the UFC 5 runner-up, steamrolling his opposition in the first two rounds before running into **Dan Severn** in the tournament finals. He later dropped a pair of quick bouts to sambo submission ace **Oleg Taktarov**, and managed wins over tough Brazilian Carlos Baretta and UFC 1 veteran **Patrick Smith**, but Beneteau never really equaled the success of his debut performance. More

recently, Beneteau has become a vocal critic of the sport, and in a 2008 appearance on Canadian sports network TSN, he argued that MMA is held back from further growth by the fighters' tattoos and use of phrases such as "yo, bro." Aside from **Randy Couture** and a handful of others, Beneteau has no regard for any current MMA competitor: "everything underneath that — trash." Beneteau thinks the overall classlessness of the sport is exemplified by **Dana White's** language, and that it's this classlessness that will keep mixed martial arts from ever truly capturing the boxing audience. And what's more, Beneteau argued, "They don't deserve it."

Bisping, Michael

Nickname: The Count	Height: 6'2"
Weight: 185-205 lbs	Born: 2/28/79
Debut: P & G 2 (4/10/04)	Career Record: 19-3
Notable Wins: Josh Haynes (<i>The Ultimate Fighter</i> 3 Finale); Matt Hamill (UFC 75); Chris Leben (UFC 89); Wanderlei Silva (UFC 110)	
Notable Losses: Rashad Evans (UFC 78); Dan Henderson (UFC 100)	

Michael Bisping was like a gift from the heavens for the **UFC**. Just as they were planning an expansion into the United Kingdom, a native Briton, a superstar, appeared out of nowhere. Bisping was the European star they desperately needed, the perfect man to sell the sport on a new continent.

In Their Own Words: Michael Bisping on advice for Ultimate Fighter winners

"They are all going to get a lot of attention after this and you know just to take it. Try and maximize the potential and make the most out of it. I told them all to get themselves a good manager. I think that's very important, especially in this game now. Especially, you know, this show is business, the bulk of it now.

"I was on *The Ultimate Fighter* and when I won it, that was great. It was fantastic. It was a massive opportunity. But it was one thing winning the ultimate fighter and the prize of the contract with the UFC. That's all well and good. Now, you've got to go out and you've got to be competitive and ultimately you've got to win your fights in the UFC. And you know if you don't do that then the prize is worth nothing really at the end of the day. You know no one wants to go out, win the ultimate fighter, and then lose your fights. The easy part for me was winning the ultimate fighter. Now, the hard part is to win your fights in the UFC."

Bisping was the winner of the third season of *The Ultimate Fighter*, but he wasn't thought to be the same level of prospect the UFC had found in the first two seasons. He was a striker with a weak **wrestling** game, a dangerously limited combination for a fighter seeking success in the Octagon. In the season finale, Bisping struggled to defeat journeyman Josh Haynes, an undersized yet somehow overweight fighter from Oregon's **Team Quest**.

When he made it to the UFC proper, Bisping showed remarkable improvement, winning three fights in a row (one a controversial decision win over *Ultimate Fighter* nemesis **Matt Hamill**) before making his first appearance in a main event against fellow *Ultimate Fighter* winner **Rashad Evans** at UFC 78. Evans out-pointed Bisping to win a split decision and the fight made one thing abundantly clear: Bisping was too small to fight at 205 pounds.

His move to middleweight was another tremendous success. Bisping won three in a row at the new weight, making a strong case for a possible title shot. He almost earned that opportunity, being cast as a coach opposite **Dan Henderson** on *The Ultimate Fighter* 9. Britain's top MMA star fronted a team of his countrymen against Henderson's Team USA. Bisping's team was victorious, but Henderson got the ultimate revenge, knocking out the charismatic Brit in the first round at UFC 100.

But Bisping soldiers on. Whether dismantling **Denis Kang**, going the distance with the great **Wanderlei Silva**, or grinding it out against Dan Miller, Bisping unquestionably gives his all, much to the delight of his legions of loyal British fans.

Blatnick, Jeff

When Jeff Blatnick flew into Tulsa, Oklahoma, for **UFC 4**, he didn't know what to expect. Blatnick, a 1984 Olympic gold medalist in Greco-Roman **wrestling**, knew only his old friend **Dan Severn**. The other fighters on the card were a mystery to him, as were the techniques and strategies. In the finals, Severn faced the previously unbeatable **Royce Gracie**. As Gracie snuck his legs up for a fight-ending **triangle choke**, Blatnick assured the audience that there was no danger to Severn. When Severn tapped the mat (and a joyous **Jim Brown** taunted Blatnick), the wrestler realized he had a lot to learn.

To his credit, learn it he did. Blatnick has long been interested in the idea of mixed matches. Years earlier, in his Olympic heyday, he would argue with friends that feared heavyweight boxer Mike Tyson would be unable to stop his wrestling technique. Once exposed to the UFC, he wanted to know more. He rolled on the mat with champions like **Frank Shamrock** so he could understand the strategy on the ground. As the color commentator for more than seven

years' worth of UFC cards, Blatnick became a keen observer of the sport. His Olympic credentials also allowed him to become a powerful advocate, addressing state athletic commissions and legislatures about the sport's safety record and well-established rules.

In 1998, Blatnick became the UFC's commissioner. He was also put in charge of establishing the sport's rules. Contrary to a myth perpetrated in the media by the UFC's new owners at **Zuffa**, the sport had already established most of the rules used today before **Dana White** was ever involved in the company. Blatnick, with the help of current UFC vice president **Joe Silva** and referee **John McCarthy**, created the Mixed Martial Arts Council (MMAC). The MMAC created a rulebook that was the foundation of the **Unified Rules** still used today across the nation.



In Their Own Words: Jeff Blatnick on coining the term "mixed martial arts"

"When I first started with the UFC, at UFC 4, we didn't really have a good name for all of this. Some people called it NHB, for no-holds-barred, but I just called it fighting. But then Joe Silva reminded me of something I had said when I was broadcasting the UWF 1 events from Japan. They were like the UFC, but a work. My broadcast partner was Al Rosen and he asked me what we would be seeing in the ring. I said all they were doing was mixing the martial arts. They were doing nothing illegal; everything was allowed under the rules of a martial arts discipline. That was even more true of the UFC. No one had ever combined the martial arts like this. I coined the phrase mixed martial arts and it stuck. I grabbed it, used it, and that was how we sold it. It wasn't NHB, which had a stigma. It was MMA."

After UFC 32, Zuffa retired Blatnick as an announcer, bringing in comedian **Joe Rogan** to fill his role as color commentator. Today, Blatnick continues to be an advocate for the sport of MMA in his native New York and serves as a judge and referee in the state of New Jersey.

Bohlander, Jerry

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 200 lbs

Born: 2/12/74

Debut: UFCF 2 (11/9/95)

Career Record: 11-4

Notable Wins: Scott Ferrozzo (UFC 8); Kevin Jackson (UFC 16)

Notable Losses: Gary Goodridge (UFC 8); Murilo Bustamante (Pentagon Combat); Tito Ortiz (UFC 18)

Among **Ken Shamrock's** many great students, Jerry Bohlander stood out from the very start. As a teenager he was hooked from the first moment he saw Shamrock and **Royce Gracie** lock horns at **UFC 1**. He and his high school buddy **Pete Williams** drove an hour from their homes to train with the legend. Bohlander beat one of Ken's experienced fighters that night and Shamrock invited him to try out for his pro team, the **Lion's Den**.

Bohlander and Williams moved into the fighters' house, where they lived with **Frank Shamrock**, Mikey Burnette, and Jason DeLucia. The Lion's Den was designed to test fighters mentally and physically. Many others came through the fighters' house. Very few lasted long; Bohlander was a survivor.

When Shamrock had to choose a student to compete in the UFC, Bohlander had a chance to earn his shot at the big time. Nothing was given in the Den. Bohlander had to fight his buddy Williams for the opportunity. Despite giving up 40 pounds, he tapped out his friend with a **heel hook**.

The larger Williams ended up being an appropriate test. UFC 8 was a David versus Goliath event, pitting lighter weight fighters against a bevy of monsters. Across the cage from Bohlander was the 350-pound Scott Ferrozzo. Incredibly, Bohlander was able to outlast Ferrozzo, finishing him off with a **guillotine choke** after more than nine minutes of fighting. He fell short in his second fight against arm wrestler **Gary Goodridge**, but had proven he belonged. Bohlander had earned another shot.

At UFC 12 he was pitted against men his own size and made short work of them, taking the first lightweight tournament after only two minutes in the cage. It ended up being one of his career highlights. The other was an **arm bar** win over Olympic gold medalist Kevin Jackson at UFC 16. It was a whirlwind few weeks. After being pulled from the fight in favor of Fabio Gurgel (whom

Bohlander had beaten at UFC 11) Bohlander was offered the fight a second time after Gurgel pulled out with less than four weeks left to train. Even though he knew he would be out of shape, Bohlander thought it was too good an opportunity to pass up. He submitted Jackson, the last time he would earn a victory at the highest level of the sport.

Bohlander's defeat at the hands of **Tito Ortiz** at UFC 18 was one of the early shots fired in the war between the Lion's Den and Ortiz. Bohlander was burned out and losing interest in the sport. There simply didn't seem to be a way to make a living in those days, the dark era when the sport had no cable deal and didn't even release the shows on home video. After 9/11, Bohlander's future seemed clear to him. He joined the police force in Napa, California, where he serves as a SWAT team member while occasionally teaching MMA at a local school. At 35, he is still young enough to have the occasional itch to take it up again. Then he thinks about his wife and the family they want to start and holds fast to the stability, health insurance, and other benefits of his new life.

Bonnar, Stephan

Nickname: American Psycho

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 4/4/77

Debut: IHC 3 (11/10/01)

Career Record: 12-7

Notable Win: Keith Jardine (*Ultimate Fight Night 4*)

Notable Losses: Forrest Griffin (*The Ultimate Fighter 1* Finale, UFC 62); Rashad Evans (*Ultimate Fight Night 5*); Mark Coleman (UFC 100)

With the rise of **Forrest Griffin** from reality show contestant to champion, it's easy to forget that the man on the cover of the UFC video game could have just as easily been Stephan Bonnar. Bonnar and Griffin went toe-to-toe and punch for punch to conclude the first season of *The Ultimate Fighter*. It's a fight that has been widely credited with saving the entire sport. The two men showed the kind of guts that made many viewers fans for life. The blood, sweat, and sheer drama of it all helped Spike TV decide to renew the show.

Griffin and Bonnar seemed to be mirror images, but in the ensuing two years differences emerged. While Griffin trained like a maniac and devoted himself to becoming the best fighter in the sport, Bonnar was more likely to be seen in the clubs and hanging out with porn stars. When the two had their inevitable rematch, their skill levels had diverged dramatically. Griffin simply outclassed Bonnar the second time around, a victory for hard work and dedication in a world that often rewards taking the easy route.

To make matters worse, after the fight Bonnar tested positive for the **steroid** Boldenone, a drug used by veterinarians to rehabilitate injured horses. It seems Bonnar couldn't even put in the effort to cheat right. Athletes and body builders almost never use Boldenone because it can stay in your system for months. Bonnar, to his credit, was honest about his use with the Nevada State Athletic Commission, simply admitting to using the drug and apologizing. This helped minimize his fine and resulted in just a nine-month suspension.

Bonnar seemed to be getting his career back on track after two undercard wins when a serious knee injury caused him to miss all of 2008. When he returned he looked like the same fighter he had been in 2005, losing handily to rising prospect **Jon Jones**. Because of his important role in laying the foundation for the company's success, Bonnar's place in the UFC seems secure. But it appears it will be as an undercard attraction. Bonnar will have a cageside view from that position, watching Forrest Griffin in the main events and wondering what might have been.

Bowles, Brian

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 135 lbs

Born: 6/22/80

Debut: Wild Bill's Fight Night 2 (5/12/06)

Career Record: 8-1

Notable Wins: Damacio Page (WEC 35); Will Ribeiro (WEC 37); Miguel Torres (WEC 42)

Notable Loss: Dominic Cruz (WEC 47)

It's pretty wild to have your name mentioned among the sport's pound-for-pound best before your tenth professional fight, but that's exactly what happened for Brian Bowles after he came apparently out of nowhere to stop the unbeatable **Miguel Torres** and claim the **WEC** bantamweight (135 pounds) championship. It all happened pretty quickly for a man who only a couple of years before was fighting out of a promotion called Wild Bill's Fight Night in Duluth, Georgia. A product of The Hardcore Gym in Athens, the same team that produced future light heavyweight champion **Forrest Griffin**, Bowles is a solid wrestler with serious natural punching power. Just ask Torres, whom Bowles staggered with his first punch of their title bout. Minutes later, Torres thought he had Bowles hurt with a solid right hand of his own, and chased his backpedaling opponent behind a wild flurry of looping punches. But Bowles kept his composure, and connected with a short hook that put the champ on his back. Referee Josh Rosenthal came in late with the stoppage as Bowles rained down blows, but you can understand his moment of hesitation. Nobody thought they were going to see anything but another routine

title defense from a fighter who hadn't been stopped in almost 40 professional bouts. But Brian Bowles changed all that in an instant, claiming the most prestigious bantamweight title in the MMA world, and inscribing his name alongside those of the best in the game.

Boxing

For years, boxing set the standard when it came to combat sports worldwide. The Asian martial arts had some cachet, with their exotic styles and infamous death touches, but the consensus was that the world heavyweight boxing champion was the toughest man on the planet. That's why establishing MMA's primacy, placing it atop the sweet science, has been such an obsession for martial artists and promoters in both **professional wrestling** and MMA.

Almost every heavyweight boxing champion, from Jack Dempsey forward, got involved in the world of professional wrestling when they retired. Their role was a simple one: the boxer would serve as a special referee. When the bad guy went too far, the boxer would knock his lights out, earning a healthy paycheck and sending the crowd home happy. The boxers were never in-ring participants. There was talk of putting together a big match between Dempsey



and Ed “Strangler” Lewis, but Dempsey knew enough to realize he would be out of his element when Lewis took him to the mat.

Helio Gracie never got a major boxer involved in **Vale Tudo**, despite years of trying. Unlike the wrestling promoters, Gracie wasn’t offering an easy buck; he wanted a fight. He challenged the legendary Joe Louis, but the Brown Bomber was likely unaware of Gracie’s existence. The world’s top boxers became a Holy Grail for the Gracie family. **Rorion Gracie** challenged Mike Tyson and **Ralph Gracie** challenged Roy Jones when both boxers were in their prime. Neither boxer answered the challenge. And why would they? A top professional boxer made millions for every fight. It made no sense to risk their health and take a significant pay cut to accept the Gracie Challenge. It was this obsession with top boxers that made Rorion insist that **Royce Gracie**’s first opponent at **UFC 1** be the one-gloved Art Jimmerson. A fringe contender, Jimmerson was no Tyson. But he was as close as a Gracie would come to beating a top contender until **Renzo Gracie** beat former cruiserweight champion James Warring.

Martial artists had better luck getting boxers into the ring in Japan. Muhammad Ali helped create the shoot-style **wrestling** movement with his famous match against **Antonio Inoki** in 1976. Others followed Ali’s lead. Probably because they figured no one would ever hear about it back in the States, champion boxers were willing to step into the ring with the Japanese stars. The “Hands of Stone” Roberto Duran squared off with **Masakatsu Funaki** in a surprisingly good wrestling match. Former heavyweight champion Trevor Berbick got a rude surprise in his match with **Nobuhiko Takada**. Assuming that no kicks were allowed below the waist, like many of the kickboxing matches that aired on American television, Berbick was brutalized by Takada’s hard leg kicks. He complained after each kick. After the third kick he was through, hopping out of the ring and limping to the back, complaining all the way.

Eventually, the top MMA fighters realized they had plenty to learn from boxing. With bare knuckles, fighters weren’t able to effectively utilize many boxing techniques. The UFC’s adoption of gloves allowed fighters to use modified modern boxing techniques, including blocking incoming punches with the hands. Among the first fighters to show that boxing could be applied intelligently among the many mixed techniques of an MMA fight was **Randy Couture**. Couture, relying on basic boxing techniques he learned in the Army, was able to use foot movement and dirty boxing to befuddle the younger and quicker **Vitor Belfort**. Today, there are few successful fighters in MMA who haven’t studied boxing. Among fighters who want to maintain their balance and avoid fighting on the ground, boxing has surpassed **Muay Thai** as the standup art of choice.

Brabo: see **Arm triangle**

Bravo, Eddie

Unfortunately, it can be hard to take no-gi **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** innovator Eddie Bravo seriously sometimes. It's obviously not his competition record — a stunning win by **triangle choke** over **Royler Gracie** at the 2003 **ADCC** Submission Wrestling Championships is no mean feat. It's definitely not the 10th Planet jiu-jitsu style he founded — the complex and physically demanding rubber **guard** system Bravo pioneered has proven itself a valuable grappling tool. You might think it's his enthusiastic online support of conspiracy theories, his choice to include an atrocious blackface comedy bit on his instructional DVD, or his baffling introductory essay to *Mastering the Rubber Guard*, in which he expounds on such key fighting topics as marijuana (Eddie likes), his relationship with his father (Eddie does not like), and his various musical projects (dude, Blackened Kill Symphony found the Linkin Park sound before Linkin Park!). But it's not any of that, really. What makes Eddie Bravo the butt of so many jokes is simple: it's the names. The *names*.

"Sometimes my students come up with the names," Bravo explains. "More often it's just myself, depending on how stoned I am." The Drowning Wizard, Zombie, Night of the Living Dead, Exhumer, Mission Control, Crack Head Control, Jiu-Claw, East Coast Croc, Rescue Dog, Chill Dog, Mad Dog Control, Drowning Jiu, The Carni, The Snitch . . . this is but the tip of the iceberg. These arbitrary names for techniques and positions are often laughable — which, one assumes, is at least partly the point: say what you will, Eddie Bravo is obviously a man with a sense of humor. But they also serve as a kind of secret language available only to insiders. If you're on the mat and you hear your opponent's coach calling for a **Kimura**, you know what to look out for. But what if you hear him asking for Retard Control? What on earth do you do with that?

The cat is out of the bag, however, now that Bravo has published much of his system, and his friend and student **UFC** announcer **Joe Rogan** enthusiastically calls out 10th Planet positional names whenever a fighter so much as approximates rubber guard — an open guard variation in which a fighter holds one leg very high on his opponent's back with the opposite arm, breaking down posture and creating increased opportunities for a variety of submissions (including the otherwise very rare **omoplata** and **gogoplata**). There's no doubt Bravo is on to something, and something genuinely effective. It would be a shame if his considerable contributions to jiu-jitsu were overshadowed by his eccentricities.

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu

It seems as though every martial art has its share of tall tales about its early days, oft-repeated exaggerations or half-truths that don't bear scrutiny but somehow survive all the same. Brazilian Jiu-jitsu — “Gracie Jiu-jitsu” is a narrower term, in effect a brand name closely guarded by **Rorion Gracie** — is no exception. There's no question that **Carlos Gracie** studied briefly under Kodokan judo fourth-degree black belt **Mitsuyo Maeda** and, alongside brother **Helio Gracie**, laid the foundation for one of the world's most celebrated grappling arts. That much is certain. But what, exactly, Maeda taught the young Gracie is the subject of some dispute. Despite a lack of evidence that Maeda ever studied traditional koryu jiu-jitsu — or any other martial art besides sumo before entering the Kodokan — members of the Gracie family stubbornly maintain otherwise. Crosley Gracie is perhaps the worst offender, offering an account of Maeda using his classical jiu-jitsu skills to overmatch his first five opponents at the Kodokan en route to being awarded his purple belt — never mind that colored belts beyond white, brown, and black to indicate rank were not introduced until decades later by Mikonosuke Kawaishi teaching in France. Even **Renzo Gracie**, who, with his co-author John Danaher, quite reasonably suggests that Brazilian Jiu-jitsu resembles early Kodokan judo much more closely than any branch of koryu jiu-jitsu, maintains that Maeda was “a highly regarded student of classical jiu-jitsu [who] eventually switched to Kodokan judo.” In every telling of the tale, there's the suggestion that the Gracies, through Maeda, represent a link to the mysterious jiu-jitsu of the past, to ancient principles and techniques that would otherwise be lost to the modern world. It's been an important part of the Gracie myth.

It's a shame, because the truth, while less exotic, is far more impressive. The jiu-jitsu (simply an older transliteration of the same kanji that give us “jujitsu” or “jujutsu”) that the Gracies developed out of Carlos's brief, four-year study under Maeda is an incredible achievement, one born of constant technical refinement and the Gracies' willingness to test themselves against exponents of all styles. Maeda's teachings were by all accounts influenced by his own long career of challenge matches and prizefights, and the Gracies put that knowledge to good use. By emphasizing the importance of ground fighting and articulating their own view of **positional hierarchy** with perfect clarity, the Gracies turned the absolute basics of judo into arguably the finest submission fighting system in the world. The family's success in the earliest days of mixed martial arts — most notably in the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, an event designed for this express purpose — proved the effectiveness of their then little-known style to a broad audience. The slow, incremental improve-

ments on the ground led inevitably to chokes, arm locks, and the occasional **leg lock**; audiences were transfixed, and the Gracie empire was born.

Those jiu-jitsu practitioners who have stayed closest to the original Gracie lineage continue to emphasize their system as a method of self-defense, first and foremost. The further one branches out from the many-limbed Gracie family tree, however, the more one veers towards sport Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, with its emphasis on point-based competition strategies. But jiu-jitsu practitioners of either variety continue to demonstrate the undeniable effectiveness of their discipline at the highest levels of MMA, where no fighter is truly prepared to enter the ring or the cage without a solid grounding in the principles Maeda imparted to the Gracie family almost a century ago.

Brazilian Top Team (BTT)

You could say that Brazilian Top Team isn't what it used to be. But that's only because BTT used to be the best mixed martial arts fight team in the world, home to **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, **Antonio Rogerio Nogueira**, **Ricardo Arona**, **Vitor Belfort**, and **Paulo Filho**, alongside founders **Murilo Bustamante** and **Mario Sperry**. The team took shape under Bustamante, Sperry, Luis Roberto Duarte,



and Ricardo Loborio in April 2000, after an acrimonious split with **Carlson Gracie**, and quickly earned its reputation by producing champions in both **Pride** and the **UFC**. A protracted feud between Rio's BTT and Curitiba's **Chute Boxe Academy** reached its climax at Pride's Final Conflict 2005, where Arona defeated Chute Boxe standard-bearer **Wanderlei Silva** before being KO'd on the same night by **Mauricio Rua**. Loborio left to found **American Top Team** in 2003, and BTT was further diminished by the departures of **Mario Sperry** and the Nogueira brothers after the death of Pride changed the economics of the sport. But BTT soldiers on under the leadership of Bustamante, and has established satellite schools in America, Canada, England, Australia, Hong Kong, and Belgium.

Brown, Jim

In 1993, the **UFC** was looking to establish an identity, to tell people and sports-writers what they were all about. They needed an announcer and advocate who impressed older sports media, one who also had a passing familiarity with violence. Jim Brown was perfect. To football fans in the baby boomer generation, Brown was simply the greatest. Not only was he the NFL's all-time leading rusher, he accomplished that goal while never taking a step back and never stepping out of bounds to avoid a hit.

Brown also had a street edge that worked well with the UFC's underground vibe. He worked with gangs, had been an outspoken activist, and looked like a man who wouldn't be afraid to sock you in the mouth. Brown had also been accused of violence against women and beating people up on the street.

In Their Own Words: Jim Brown on violence

"I have never touched my wife, and since 1988, I have not said a loud word to anyone based upon the work and the people that I am dealing with, because I deal with violent people every day and I must set an example and I must have them believe I'm not a hypocrite or a phony . . . have been an independent man in our society. I have been an activist. I have been a community person. I have been outspoken. I have been around Malcolm. I have been around the Nation of Islam. I have been in what you might call volatile situations. I have fought all of my life for freedom, equality, and justice when there was racism up to here in this country. I am 63 years old. I have not ever succumbed to the authorities. I have always been known as an outspoken, independent individual."

He was edgy, but he didn't have any real martial arts background. Producers were savvy enough not to try to pigeonhole him in that role. Instead, he was the everyman and his presence was integral as the voice of the fan. Brown watched the fights and said aloud the things fans were thinking, asked the questions many were asking at home about jiu-jitsu and grappling. And when Jim Brown said someone was a tough guy, well, that meant something.

Brown, Mike

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 145 lbs

Born: 9/8/75

Debut: Mass Destruction 1 (4/1/01)

Career Record: 23-6

Notable Wins: Yves Edwards (BodogFight: St. Petersburg); Jeff Curran (WEC 34); Urijah Faber (WEC 36, WEC 41)

Notable Losses: Hermes Franca (HOOKnSHOOT: Kings 1); Genki Sudo (UFC 47); Joe Lauzon (Combat Zone 8); Masakazu Imanari (Deep 22nd Impact); Jose Aldo (WEC 44)

If you knew about Mike Brown before he made his **WEC** debut in 2008, it was probably because you'd seen **Genki Sudo** style on him years before in the **UFC**. Or maybe you'd watched a YouTube clip of **Masakazu Imanari** dislocating Brown's knee with a truly horrific **heel hook**. It didn't matter that Brown had amassed a record of 18 wins against only four losses by the time he stepped into the cage to face Jeff Curran; the man was thoroughly obscure. But with his solid performance in a decision win over Curran, Brown earned a shot at **Urijah Faber's** featherweight title. It looked like it was going to be just another routine defense for "The California Kid," who'd been making it look easy. But after getting a little too fancy, and trying out an admittedly very cool-looking reverse elbow, Faber found himself staring up at the ceiling after a Mike Brown right hook. Brown silenced any critics who considered his upset title win a fluke when he went the distance against Faber in the rematch, controlling the pace of the fight and doing enough damage to easily take the decision in a first-rate fight. It's a shame Brown had to wait so late in his career to finally achieve some measure of acclaim, but such has been the fate of fighters competing anywhere below lightweight. By putting on the kinds of bouts he has with Faber and with **Jose Aldo** — Brown is helping to change that.

Browning, Junie

Nickname: The Lunatik

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 5/12/85

Debut: Freestyle Cage Fighting (1/19/08) **Career Record:** 4-3
Notable Win: Dave Kaplan (*The Ultimate Fighter* 8 Finale)
Notable Loss: Cole Miller (*Ultimate Fight Night* 18)

There are, broadly speaking, two approaches a fighter can take to appearing on *The Ultimate Fighter* reality show. He can recognize the singularity of the opportunity before him, embrace the challenge, and use the six weeks of secluded training to better himself as an athlete and take an important step forward in both his technical development and his professional career. Or he can tell racist jokes, engage in drunken sob stories and self-pity, throw glasses and coffee mugs at people, ignore the advice of world-class coaches and trainers, and denounce even the most routine civilities as “gay as hell.” Junie Browning, an absurd, pathetic, tiny man, chose the second course. And, in so doing, Browning became by far the most interesting part of the otherwise completely forgettable eighth season of *TUF*. Unfortunately, it turned out Browning couldn’t fight a lick, which kept his stated plan of becoming the new **Chris Leben** from becoming a reality. He left us, though, with one of the most memorable exchanges in *TUF* history when confronted by **Dana White** about his self-destructive behavior. “Junie,” White asked, “what the fuck is wrong with you?” Junie’s single-word answer said it all: “Drinkin’.” In the fall of 2009, just when it seemed like we were done with Junie, he put himself in the headlines after freaking out nurses treating him for a drug overdose by screaming, “Do you know who I am? I will kill you and rape your family.” Nice, Junie. Real nice.

Buentello, Paul

Nickname: The Headhunter **Height:** 6’2”
Weight: 245 lbs **Born:** 1/16/74
Debut: USWF 4 (4/12/97) **Career Record:** 28-12
Notable Wins: Justin Eilers (UFC 51); David “Tank” Abbott (Strikeforce: Tank vs. Buentello); Gary Goodridge (Affliction: Banned)
Notable Losses: Ricco Rodriguez (KOTC 7); Andrei Arlovski (UFC 55); Alistair Overeem (Strikeforce: Four Men Enter, One Man Survives)

When Paul Buentello yells, “Don’t fear me” in a post-fight interview, he’s *really* hoping you’ll yell back “Fear the consequences.” But it doesn’t always work out that way.

The chubby, doe-eyed Buentello, a kickboxer capable of highlight-reel knockouts against B- and C-level opponents, has cut a swath through the sec-

ond tier of American MMA organizations. He also posted a solid 3–1 record during a **UFC** tenure, which, unfortunately for him, was defined by two inglorious moments: his goofy, failed catchphrase, and a 15-second loss to **Andrei Arlovski** in a heavyweight title bout.

Blink and you’ll miss it: a mere eight seconds into round one, Arlovski and Buentello both throw right hands. Arlovski’s connects with Buentello’s chin, and Buentello slumps over Arlovski’s back, falling to the mat. **John McCarthy** rushes in to stop the fight, much to the confusion of the booing crowd and commentator **Joe Rogan**: “Arlovski takes him down — what happened? What happened?” Only upon replay could anyone but Big John see the blow that ended the fight.

And so it was on to the **Tank Abbotts**, **Gary Goodridges** and Ruben Villareals of the world for Paul Buentello, lesser opponents on lesser shows. Given the power Buentello packs in his right hand, a return to the bright lights of the UFC doesn’t seem out of the question. He’s still capable of lighting up most pro heavyweights on any given night.

Okay now, all together this time: *don’t fear him . . .*

Buffer, Bruce

Michael Buffer is the premier ring announcer in the world. If there is a major fight in boxing, or a big match in **professional wrestling**, it’s likely Buffer will be there with his trademark phrase “Let’s get ready to rumble.” Contrary to popular belief, Michael Buffer was also the ring announcer for several early **UFC** events, but had to step back when his primary employer, the WCW wrestling group, decided that the UFC was competition. His stepbrother Bruce Buffer stepped in for him and never looked back.

Bruce was one of several ring announcers the UFC used after that, but none wanted it more than he did. Buffer maneuvered his way onto the popular television show *Friends* when **Tank Abbott** made his appearance in



1997 and used the attention to secure the position for good, starting with UFC 13. Buffer has been the “Voice of the Octagon” ever since, popularizing catchphrases of his own, like “It’s time.”

One of the highlights of seeing the UFC live is experiencing the “Buffer 180.” When Buffer is introducing a fighter, he will often look to the opposite corner before making a dramatic 180 degree turn towards the fighter whose name he’s calling. It’s hilarious and theatrical and one of the things that make the UFC a great live experience.

Bustamante, Murilo

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 7/30/66

Debut: Desafio: Jiu-jitsu vs. Luta Livre (9/26/91)

Career Record: 22-7-1

Notable Wins: Yoji Anjo (UFC 25); Jerry Bohlander (Pentagon Combat); Sanae Kikuta (UFC 33); Dave Menne (UFC 35); Matt Lindland (UFC 37)

Notable Losses: Chuck Liddell (UFC 33); Quinton Jackson (Pride Total Elimination 2003); Dan Henderson (Pride Final Conflict 2003, Pride Shockwave 2005); Kazuhiro Nakamura (Pride Final Conflict 2004)

If it wasn’t for bad luck, Murilo Bustamante would have none at all. The **Brazilian Top Team** founder and **Carlson Gracie** black belt was in more than his fair share of tight, back-and-forth battles over the course of his fine career, and he always seemed to come out on the wrong end of the judges’ decision. It’s true that Bustamante holds a record of three wins and six losses in fights that have gone the distance. But a number of those decision losses have been so questionable that it’s difficult to see Bustamante as anything but hard done by.

Bustamante began his career undefeated in eight fights, picking up wins over slick grapplers **Jerry Bohlander** and **Sanae Kikuta**, and fighting the enormous **Tom Erikson** to a draw. Bustamante then went the distance with **Chuck Liddell** in an extremely close fight at a time when Liddell was streaking towards his first shot at the light heavyweight title. After that loss, Bustamante decided a change to middleweight was in order. He knocked out **Dave Menne** to become the **UFC’s** second middleweight champion, which set the stage for his title defense against the then-undefeated **Matt Lindland** in one of the weirdest fights you’ll ever see.

In the first round, Bustamante put on a clinic. He clinched with the Olympic Greco-Roman **wrestling** silver medalist, took him down with an outside trip, and systematically worked his way from **guard** to **half-guard** to **mount**.



As Lindland bridged and rolled to escape, Bustamante seized hold of Lindland's arm and straightened it out into a textbook **arm bar**. Lindland made several ambiguous movements with his free hand that looked enough like tapping for referee **John McCarthy** to step in. Bustamante, a sportsman, relinquished the hold immediately, but McCarthy had second thoughts. Lindland insisted he hadn't tapped, and McCarthy, in a rare instance of poor judgment, sent the fighters back to their corners and restarted the bout. This could happen to no one but Murilo Bustamante. Ultimately, it wouldn't matter, as Bustamante handled Lindland the rest of the way, dropping him with a straight right hand in the third round and finishing with a **guillotine choke** in the ensuing scramble.

Bustamante departed for the greener pastures in **Pride** while still holding the UFC middleweight title, but his strange luck followed him there, as he dropped a decision to **Quinton Jackson** after doing what probably should have been enough to win — in a fight he took on only five days' notice, no less. Bustamante would never again claim championship gold, but came tantalizingly close after fighting his way through Pride's welterweight (183 pounds) tournament to meet **Dan Henderson** at the 2005 Shockwave New Year's Eve show. True to form for both fighters, Henderson squeaked through with a split decision in a fight that could easily have gone the other way, and Bustamante was left wondering what he had to do to catch a break.



Cage Force

Cage Force, the most recent series of events promoted by the longstanding Greater Common Multiple organization, is marked by two distinctions. First, it runs under the most generic possible name, seemingly a product of a random MMA promotion generator. Second, it's the only Japanese organization to run in a cage rather than a ring. This makes it well positioned as a proving ground for Japanese fighters with an eye towards competition abroad. **UFC** middleweight contender **Yushin Okami** — the last man to defeat **Anderson Silva**, albeit by DQ — and welterweight **Yoshiyuki Yoshida** are two Greater Common Multiple alumni who have taken that path. Expect to see more fighters follow their lead. With eight to ten events a year, and annual tournaments separating the wheat from the chaff, Greater Common Multiple's Cage Force events could become a significant source of Japanese talent for the **UFC**.

Cage Rage

As the story goes, Alex Jones and Tom Bell had no grand design, no master plan behind the first fight show they put on together. They were just trying to get enough money together to buy some new mats for their club. They succeeded beyond all expectations, and slowly built Cage Rage into the U.K.'s premier mixed martial arts organization. Naturally, they showcased native U.K. talent like **Michael Bisping**, Ian Freeman, and **James Thompson**, but they also brought in top international fighters like **Vitor Ribeiro**, **Anderson Silva**, and **Vitor Belfort**. Any promotion that has featured both Butterbean *and* **Herb Dean** — not in the same bout, unfortunately — clearly deserves the support and respect of the discerning MMA fan. In September 2007, Cage Rage was acquired by **EliteXC**, a ridiculous company that ingloriously crashed out of the MMA business altogether a year later, spelling the end for the venerable U.K. promotion. No worries, though: former Cage Rage executives Dave O'Donnell and Andy Geer quickly changed the name of the previously announced Cage Rage 29 event on just a few weeks' notice, formed a new group called

Ultimate Challenge U.K., and continue to run regularly out of The Troxy in London.

Canseco, Jose

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 253 lbs

Born: 6/2/64

Debut: Dream 9 (5/26/09)

Career Record: 0-1

Notable Loss: Hong-Man Choi (Dream 9)

If MMA is the new boxing, is the corollary that celebrity MMA is the new celebrity boxing? If the career death spiral of former big league slugger and current D-list personality Jose Canseco is any indication, then maybe. Never one to shy away from a camera (or a paycheck), the 1988 American League MVP made his MMA debut at the age of 44 against a diminished Hong-Man Choi as part of the **Dream** organization's boldly named Super Hulk Grand Prix. The results were about what you'd expect: less entertaining than the fly ball that famously ricocheted off Canseco's head for a home run, but more entertaining than Canseco's accounts of his erotic near miss with Madonna. A Tae Kwan Do black belt, Canseco managed an offense of a few jerky punches and hopeful kicks to the body of the listless giant, but a bum knee had Canseco on the mat tapping to strikes in only 77 seconds. Worryingly, Canseco did not announce his retirement from the sport immediately following the bout.

Carano, Gina

Nickname: Conviction

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 140-145 lbs

Born: 4/16/82

Debut: WEF: Orleans Arena (6/10/06)

Career Record: 7-1

Notable Win: Kelly Kobald (EliteXC: Heat)

Notable Loss: Cris "Cyborg" Santos (Strikeforce: Carano vs. Cyborg)

Gina Carano, whether deserving or not, is the face of women's MMA. Busty, pretty, and goofily charming, Carano made as many waves with her *Maxim* magazine photo shoot as she did with wins over Kaitlyn Young, Julie Kedzie, or Kelly Kobald. Carano's sex appeal may actually transcend the fight game. She's on the path to bigger things: television and video games already leading up to movie cameos, leading in turn to bigger movie roles.

Carano looms over the entire women's sport. While much of that does come down to her good looks, Carano is also a heck of a fighter. Starting as

In Their Own Words: Carano on her problems making weight

"My first couple of fights I didn't have the right people around me. I did everything wrong you could possibly do. Afterward, you realize that could be a lot easier than you made it. I've got a nutritionist and she's a body builder chick so she knows. Because being female is different. We have to deal with the time of the month, and for some reason that time always pops up when you have to fight. For me at least. It's such a bitch, really, what that does to you that week and the week before. For pretty much two weeks out of the month, and I don't know if other females are like this, I feel like an insane person because my body is just all over the place. It really blows, because emotionally, it messes with your training. You don't have the drive and you feel weak. And on top of that, you're five pounds heavier because you're bloating.

"So it sucks cutting weight as a female. Everyone has their downfalls; mine's definitely been the weight issue. I'm getting more balanced. I've got the people around me now who are giving me the correct information. So I'm relying on them instead of myself. I know I'm going to freak out about everything and it's nice to have people there who are going to say 'Hey, everything's going to be okay. You're going to be fine.' I've got much more balancing to do, and I want to keep this up after the fight and not balloon up like I usually do. But I say that every fight. I'm just trying to do the best I can."

a **Muay Thai** kickboxer, Carano got interested in fighting to be closer to her then-boyfriend, fighter Kevin Ross. Her personal magnetism brought cameras into her orbit from the very beginning. Carano's earliest training escapades were filmed for the documentary *Ring Girls*.

"When we did *Ring Girls* it was still all just for fun," Carano said. "It was like, 'Yeah of course I'll go to Thailand! You're going to pay for us to go to Thailand and fight? Of course I'm going to do it! You want to film us while we're training and make some little story about it? Fine.'"

Thai boxing led to mixed martial arts, where Carano was an immediate sensation. Her standup striking was more technical than any of the girls she fought and she was a good enough athlete to survive the ground game while she learned how to grapple. Her appearances on Showtime for **EliteXC** made her a bona fide star and made her picture a popular internet search. When EliteXC ran the first MMA show in network television history, Carano was a feature performer.

After a second starring role on CBS, Carano was ready to main event. For the first time in the sport's 16-year history, two women main evented a major MMA card. She and her opponent, the fearsome Brazilian **Cris "Cyborg" Santos** were an unqualified success. They drew almost 14,000 fans to the HP Pavilion in San Jose, California, and set a Showtime record for MMA television.

It was a high point for women's MMA, but many critics expressed concern for the future of women's fighting. Carano was badly beaten in the first round and immediately departed the cage, and then the sport, taking on a starring role in the Steven Soderbergh spy thriller *Haywire*.

Carter, Shonie

Nickname: Mr. International

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 170-185 lbs

Born: 5/3/72

Debut: Extreme Challenge 3 (2/15/97) **Career Record:** 49-23-7

Notable Wins: Dave Menne (Extreme Challenge 5); Chris Lytle (Pancrase: 2000 Anniversary); Matt Serra (UFC 31)

Notable Losses: Pat Miletich (Extreme Challenge 27, UFC 32); Nathan Quarry (UFC 53); Marcus Davis (UFC Fight Night: Sanchez vs. Riggs)

Shonie Carter is a real life ronin. Like the rogue samurai of ancient times, Shonie has no master. He journeys through the world, learning martial techniques and fighting skills, and then learning some more. He's studied **wrestling** at Carson Newman College, **karate**, **judo** at the Kodokan, and **boxing** at some of the toughest gyms in the country. It's this variety of skills that makes Shonie Carter a dangerous fighter and his extensive travel that makes him such an interesting man.

Carter has earned his nickname "Mr. International" the hard way — by traveling all over the world. Carter has fought in Japan, Germany, Ireland, Canada, Poland, and Mexico. Along the way he's amassed 46 wins to go with 18 losses, but it's his style more than his skill that makes Carter stand out. Carter is one of MMA's first prominent African American fighters, and he brings a street edge to shows that are all too often filled with similar haircuts, bad tattoos, and **Affliction** T-shirts. Into this sea of sameness appears Carter, resplendent in a top hat, pimp suit, and cane.

He carries this style into the cage as well. His fights often feature high-amplitude and high-velocity judo throws and outrageous karate style strikes, including his most famous moment, a desperation spinning backfist that ended the night for **Matt Serra** at UFC 31.



For all his success, Carter had amassed only a 3–2 record in the **UFC**. Looking for another opportunity, he auditioned for the fourth season of ***The Ultimate Fighter***, a show designed to give seasoned veterans a second shot. Carter was born for reality television, livening up the worst season the show had ever had. Carter was a walking sound-bite and, stuck in a house with 16 other guys, went out of his way to annoy them with his trash talk and art projects. His best work was his sequined hat and he made an offer to everyone in the house: “If you bring it, I will bling it.”

In Their Own Words: Shonie Carter's Wild Day (as posted on The Underground Forum)

Ok, last time I was in California when it all started, but this time I have really messed up! I was out one night partying up and before I knew it, I am on a private jet. I laughed at first and passed out on the plane. I woke up in Istanbul, Turkey. The reason I know because I am looking at the Black Sea! WTF!

Later that day:

I got a ride to Bulgarian/Turkish border looking for American Embassy. Does anybody have any ideas on how to get back? The one time I leave my friggin' passport at home I need the damned thing! Somebody let bodybag76 and Immaculata know to message me here please! I am in hotel business center and my two cell phones don't work. I forgot all about that! Help me. Mr. International.

Later:

I am gonna try getting to Greece it is only an hour away. Just get me help! Send messages here [and] not MySpace – it has been phished! I just found out and don't know how to fix it yet. Gotta go, I will be back on in an about an hour! I gotta get a ride to Greece.

Final Update:

Wow, ok I made it [through] Turkey. I am in Sofia, Bulgaria, as I found out now. I got a ride from the Bulgarian girl. The truth of the matter is she was a diplomat's daughter and she was with him at the UFC. I didn't think they were serious about all of this. I am headed to an authority office of visitors since I can't find the damned U.S. embassy. Fellas this is the type of shit I go [through] in my life. I gotta get back and pay the mortgage and see my kids! I gotta train for my world middleweight title fight in the Shidokan World Championships and black belt test [on] November 22 & 23. I know you guys don't have a reason to believe me right now, but shit happens to me like [everyone] else but on a much larger scale. I have made it to a hotel business center here in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Carter was so wildly entertaining he seemed to affect the people around him. Even the fights he refereed ended up being amazing spectacles. At a Legends of Fighting event Carter was the third man in the cage when two first-time pros knocked each other out simultaneously. It was an almost unheard of double knockout, made all the better by Carter's hamming it up in amazement. It was a great moment, one of many made better by Shonie Carter.

Carwin, Shane

Nickname: The Engineer

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 260 lbs

Born: 1/4/75

Debut: WEC 17 (9/21/93)

Career Record: 21-1

Notable Wins: Christian Wellisch (UFC 84); Gabriel Gonzaga (UFC 96); Frank Mir (UFC 111)

Notable Loss: Brock Lesnar (UFC 116)

Shane Carwin is an outlier, standing apart from almost every other competitor in the sport of MMA. While the other top fighters train full-time, waking up late and lounging between their workouts, Carwin packs up his lunch pail and rolls into work as a mechanical engineer.

Carwin is a former NCAA Division II national champion wrestler, but has made his mark in MMA with his powerful punching. It's hard for his punches not to hurt — along with **Brock Lesnar**, he's one of only two fighters in the **UFC** who wear 4XL gloves.

For all of his talent, it took some time for Carwin to catch on in the **UFC**. His first two fights were on the untelevised undercard. Most fans had only seen his **UFC 96** win over former contender **Gabriel Gonzaga** when the promotion made the surprise announcement that Carwin had earned a shot at the **UFC** heavyweight champion Lesnar.

In Their Own Words: Shane Carwin on coming up through the ranks in MMA

"I know I wasn't walked through the front door of the **UFC** with people holding the door for me. I wasn't fed fights that sell pay-per-views. I was matched up by promoters and took whatever they put in front of me.

"One of those fights was the former enforcer for the Mongols Motorcycle Club. His previous fight ended when Mongols in the crowd started fighting and stabbing people.

"For Brock [Lesnar] to say that I have hand-picked my fights is just stupid.

"I got my start in the **WEC** and I have fought everyone the **UFC** put in front of me. I have fought three times as many people [as] Brock has. If he wants to disrespect the opponents I have fought, that is his choice. I say any man or woman that enters that cage to face an opponent is worthy of my respect. They have trained hard, and to disrespect MMA fighters is disrespecting the sport of MMA."

Interview by Jeremy Botter, Heavy.com

Carwin, normally even-tempered and mild-mannered, had put himself into the mix in the heavyweight division with his nationally publicized comments after Lesnar's second fight with **Frank Mir** at UFC 100. Like many fans, Carwin was disappointed in Lesnar's disrespectful post-fight antics and called him out online. Lesnar responded, and the war of words caught fans' attention. Carwin would be Lesnar's biggest challenge; with strong wrestling and true knockout power, "The Engineer" has the ability to drop any man on the planet — even the mighty Lesnar.

The two squared off at UFC 116, after Carwin had battled and defeated **Frank Mir** and Lesnar had faced down an even tougher opponent — an illness initially diagnosed as mononucleosis and then later determined to be diverticulitis. Carwin caught Lesnar with one of his giant hamhocks and had the champion reeling. Lesnar seemed on the brink of defeat, but Carwin's gas tank was empty quickly. At the halfway point of the very first round, Carwin started to slow, eventually allowing Lesnar, who was all but beaten moments before, to not just survive, but end the round on his feet and on the attack. In the second, Carwin had nothing left. In postfight interviews he would describe feeling like he was in the midst of a full body cramp. He was helpless and Lesnar quickly took him down, passed his guard, and submitted him with an arm triangle. As Lesnar locked the submission in tighter, it's possible Carwin was having second thoughts — about his training routine and his decision to be a part-time fighter.

Castillo, Gil

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170-185 lbs

Born: 10/21/65

Debut: IFC WC 6 (3/25/00)

Career Record: 19-5

Notable Wins: Vernon White (Stockton Extreme Fighting); Nate Marquardt (IFC WC 14); Chris Brennan (UFC 35)

Notable Losses: Dave Menne (UFC 33); Matt Hughes (UFC 40); Renato Verissimo (ROTR 4)

Gil Castillo was just another frustrated ex-jock when the sport of MMA exploded into the American consciousness in 1993. He had been a star wrestler at Cal State Long Beach, even making a run at the 1988 Olympic team at 147 pounds. Those days were well behind him; Castillo was behind a desk working as a stockbroker when he got curious about **Gracie Jiu-jitsu** and just how a wrestler like **Dan Severn** could lose to a man 80 pounds lighter.



He started training with **Ralph Gracie** in 1995, and just over two years later he was making his fighting debut. Fourteen wins later, he had officially caught the MMA bug and was looking to get the attention of scouts for the **UFC** and **Pride**. Castillo won the **King of the Cage** welterweight championship from **Lion's Den** prospect Joey Hurley, but that wasn't enough to earn a shot in a crowded UFC landscape.

Instead, Castillo got the UFC's attention when **Joe Silva** and **Dana White** came to an IFC card to scout **Pancrase** star **Nate Marquardt**. Castillo and Marquardt put on a great show, with Castillo getting the best of their exchanges to win the IFC welterweight title. White and Silva tracked Castillo down at a restaurant after the fight to offer him a title shot at UFC 33, the promotion's big return to pay-per-view in 2001. The problem: it was a shot at the middleweight title.

Castillo was beaten soundly by **Dave Menne** but was impressive enough to get a second shot at his natural welterweight class. He won his next UFC fight against Chris Brennan before losing to **Matt Hughes** after being cut by an illegal head butt. Already 37 years old, Castillo was past his athletic prime. After losing three of his next five fights, Castillo hung up his wrestling shoes again, this time for good.

Catch wrestling

In the 19th and early 20th century, the world was a very different place. That may seem obvious, but bears consideration. There were no televisions, no radio, and no internet. You couldn't lose yourself in video games — not even Pong. You could either read or, if you weren't of an intellectual bent, you could amuse yourself through athletics.

Needless to say, Americans were considerably more physically active then than they are today. And while team sports were often expensive, requiring equipment and the proper locale, all you needed to wrestle were two men and a bit of space. **Wrestling** and **boxing** were much more prevalent than they are today, and traveling carnivals, which endeavored to provide the entertainment people were desperate for, often included an athletic show as part of the fun.

It was there that local toughs could test themselves against seasoned professionals, often with money up for grabs. The wrestlers at these carnivals had to be tough. With his pride on the line, in front of his family and best girl, a local wrestling prodigy might stoop to dirty tactics to win a match. To prevail, the professional wrestler had to be better — and often had to be dirtier.

They developed techniques, called hooks, that could disable an opponent, causing him to cry uncle and end a match before it could become dangerous. It was called “catch as catch can” and borrowed heavily from the Lancashire style popular in Great Britain, with an American twist. In the wild and woolly West, wrestlers could often be identified by their missing eyes — gouging was not an unknown or unusual technique when the grappling got serious.

At the same time as baseball and boxing were becoming America's favorite spectator sports, wrestling was coming into its own as an attraction. Men like Frank Gotch, who had once traveled the carnival circuit — even going into lumberjack camps to find a match — were becoming popular enough to charge a paying audience eager to see them ply their trade. Instead of him coming to the fans, fans would come to him. These early **professional wrestling** contests would often last for hours. Soon everyone involved understood that it would be easier, more entertaining, and more profitable simply to give the crowd a good show. Professional wrestling didn't maintain its innocence for long, if it ever had any.

While catch wrestling with its hooks and submission holds did fall out of favor, as professionals turned to faked bouts and amateurs turned to a folk style that scored wins via pinfall only, it never died completely. Kept alive by a few die-hards like Karl Gotch and Billy Robinson, a generation of Japanese pro wrestlers learned all the hooks and holds they needed to know to be devastating on the mat. When **Pancrase** made wrestling real again in 1993, the catch style was back in a big way.

Cavalcante, Gesias

Nickname: JZ

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 7/6/83

Debut: Absolute Fighting Championships 7 (2/27/04)

Career Record: 15-3-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Rani Yahya (Hero's 7); Caol Uno (Hero's 7); Vitor Ribeiro (Hero's 10)

Notable Losses: Joachim Hansen (Shooto 2004: 7/16 in Korakuen Hall); Shinya Aoki (Dream 2); Tatsuya Kawajiri (Dream 9)

American Top Team's Gesias Cavalcante is arguably the best fighter nobody in North America really talks about. But those who follow the Japanese fight game with any interest at all know that the fighter billed there as "JZ Calvin" is without question one of the best lightweights in the sport. A slick **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** stylist and an aggressive striker, Cavalcante put together a 13-fight unbeaten streak that saw him claim both the 2006 and 2007 **Hero's** middleweight (155 pounds) Grand Prix, stopping most of his opponents not just in the first round, but in the first minute.

JZ seemed all but unstoppable as he entered the ring to face Japanese lightweight star **Shinya Aoki** in the main event of the nascent **Dream** promotion's debut show. The much-anticipated fight ended as anticlimactically as could be imagined, though, as Cavalcante landed a number of questionable elbows to the back of Aoki's neck that were judged illegal. Aoki was either unwilling or unable to continue after the unintentional fouls, and the bout was ruled no contest. There were many who questioned the legitimacy of Aoki's injuries, thinking he took the easy way out in a fight where he looked overmatched against an equally skilled but much stronger and more aggressive opponent. In those few minutes they spent in the ring together, JZ looked like the top lightweight in Japan. All he needed was one more opportunity to prove it.

But when the rematch came, the crafty Aoki controlled Cavalcante with his sophisticated **guard** work en route to a unanimous decision victory, and JZ hasn't quite managed to get back on track since. He looked to avenge an early career loss to **Joachim Hansen** on K-1 Dynamite!! 2008 New Year's Eve show, but Hansen's late withdrawal due to medical problems left Cavalcante without an opponent. After a somewhat surprising loss to the dangerous **Tatsuya Kawajiri** at Dream 9, injury trouble kept Cavalcante out of action for much of 2009. But even though he hasn't actually won a match since taking the 2007 Hero's tournament title, there can be little doubt that JZ Calvin — with his tools and his talents at only 26 years of age — will be a presence at or near the top of the lightweight division as soon as he returns.

Cheating

It's commonly believed that the earliest **UFC** contests had no rules. That's not exactly true. There were three rules in place at **UFC 1** — no groin strikes, no biting, and no eye gouging — they just weren't rules that could be enforced. Punishment entailed a small fine, paid to your opponent after the fight. You could foul your way to victory, and the meager \$1,000 fine would be easily offset by the \$50,000 in prize money. Luckily for decent people, MMA fighters couldn't do the math and no foul-fests occurred. Although no fighter paid a price after that first show, the dirty Dutchman Gerard Gordeau did bite **Royce Gracie**'s ear in the evening's final fight. The long and glorious history of MMA cheating had begun.

The discussions in the martial arts media (most prominently in *Black Belt* magazine) after the show were interesting. Instead of complaining about the brutality and lack of rules, many martial artists were insisting there were too *many* rules. After all, a number of fighting disciplines used eye gouges, and strikes to the groin were a common technique of many karateka. The UFC decided eye gouging was too dangerous and beyond the pale to ever legalize, and Gordeau showed they made the right decision by nearly blinding Yuki Nakai at **Vale Tudo** Japan 1994.

The UFC did bow to the pressure from traditional martial artists and allowed strikes to the groin. It made little difference to most karate and kung fu types, but **Keith Hackney** made it work to his advantage at **UFC 4** against Joe Son. In a clip replayed thousands — perhaps millions — of times on YouTube, Hackney brutalized Son with six hard punches to the testicles. Viewers cringed, but considering that Son was later charged with a horrific rape, it seems a fitting punishment in retrospect.

Over the years, many of the sport's most blatant rule breakers have been from Holland, perhaps following in Gordeau's treacherous footsteps. "Dirty" **Bob Schrijber** seemed to be capable of anything in the ring but was a gentleman outside the confines of combat. **Gilbert Yvel** was unable to confine his illegal attacks to his opponents. When a referee attempted to separate the fighters, Gilbert punched the official. To make it clear it was no accident, he kicked him while he was down for good measure.

In the UFC, the most controversial cheater of the **Zuffa** era is clearly "The Iceman" **Chuck Liddell**. Liddell has thumbed multiple opponents in the eye. Commentators **Mike Goldberg** and **Joe Rogan** have been careful to always proclaim the attacks "inadvertent," even if they were blatant, or fail to mention them all together. Liddell was the company's most famous fighter and it didn't pay to call his achievements into question. It is worth discussing, how-

ever, how inadvertent Liddell's repeated eye gouges actually were. Liddell's original art is Kempo Karate, a fighting style that includes plenty of eye strikes and gouges. Liddell used eye gouges to his advantage in some of his biggest career victories, including wins over **Randy Couture** and **Tito Ortiz**.

Following the lead of its professional sports brethren, the most controversial form of cheating in MMA doesn't happen in the ring or cage. **Steroid** abuse has become a significant issue for the sport. Significantly more MMA competitors than boxers test positive for illegal drugs in the state of California. And UFC fighters are not immune; despite being able to afford more sophisticated mechanisms for hiding their steroid use, UFC stars continue to get caught doping. Three active UFC champions have tested positive and were stripped of their titles: **Josh Barnett**, **Tim Sylvia**, and **Sean Sherk**. Legendary former champions, including **Kevin Randleman**, Royce Gracie, and **Ken Shamrock** have also tested positive and been suspended.

Chonan, Ryo

Nickname: Piranha

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 10/8/76

Debut: Pancrase: Neo-Blood Tournament Elimination 1 (5/5/01)

Career Record: 17-11

Notable Wins: Hayato Sakurai (Deep 12th Impact); Carlos Newton (Pride Bushido 5); Anderson Silva (Pride Shockwave 2004)

Notable Losses: Dan Henderson (Pride Bushido 9); Paulo Filho (Pride Bushido 12); Karo Parisyan (UFC 78)

"That was beautiful. You can only see this in demonstrations — this guy just did it for real." That was how **Bas Rutten**, a man who has seen it all, described the single greatest submission finish in the history of mixed martial arts, Ryo Chonan's flying scissors entry into a **heel hook** against **Anderson Silva**.

When the two met in the **Pride** ring on New Year's Eve 2004, Anderson Silva was not yet what Anderson Silva would become: the **UFC's** middleweight champion, and a perennial contender for the mythical title of top pound-for-pound fighter in the world. He was, however, a 12-2 fighter with clean, technical striking, a slick submission game, and tremendous conditioning whose previous loss (an embarrassing upset via **triangle choke** to journeyman **Daiju Takase**) was a year and a half behind him.

Ryo Chonan, a Kyokushin **karate** and **Muay Thai** exponent with no previous submission success to speak of, had hardly set the world on fire in an up-and-down run in **Deep**. His wins over **Hayato Sakurai** and **Carlos Newton**

came at a time when neither of those fighters was near the top of his game. Coming in against Silva, Chonan seemed seriously overmatched, and in the early going, he was: Silva landed a quick combination and took Chonan's back on the ground, looking to finish with a **rear naked choke**. Chonan settled in, however, generally maintaining a solid top position when the fight was on the ground, and keeping Silva at bay with a barrage of leg kicks when they returned to their feet.

Then, with Chonan less than two minutes away from an almost certain decision win, it happened. Chonan leapt at the southpaw Silva's lead right leg, entangled it, and transitioned to a heel hook as they fell to the mat. Wisely, Silva tapped immediately to the dangerous hold. Three seconds earlier, Silva had been trying desperately to land the knockout shot he needed to steal the fight. But Chonan shut the door on that possibility with his singular submission finish.

And that was by far the brightest moment for the bleached blond, creepily dead-eyed Chonan. He was unable to move up the Pride ranks after the Silva upset, dropping quick, decisive bouts to **Phil Baroni**, **Dan Henderson**, and **Paulo Filho**. A move to welterweight for his UFC debut seemed as though it might reinvigorate his flagging career, but Chonan lost three of four, and was cut from the UFC roster after a split decision loss to up-and-comer T.J. Grant. A return to the minor Japanese scene seems likely.

Chute Boxe

Curitiba, Brazil's Chute Boxe Academy, is perhaps best known now as the home of women's MMA phenom **Cristiane Santos**, her husband Evangelista, and **Strikeforce** heavyweight contender **Fabricio Werdum**. But it wasn't long ago that Rudimar Fedrigo's fight team was home to some of the most fearsome **Muay Thai** strikers in all of mixed martial arts, men who terrorized **Pride** and went toe-to-toe with their great rivals, **Brazilian Top Team**. Before a series of departures accelerated by the death of Pride and the shakeup throughout the MMA world that followed, Chute Boxe once claimed a roster that included **Wanderlei Silva**, **Mauricio** and **Murilo Rua**, **Anderson Silva**, **Gabriel Gonzaga**, and **Thiago Silva**. Even **Kazushi Sakuraba**, three times bested by Wanderlei Silva, once traveled across the Pacific to sharpen his striking game alongside the men who had engineered his downfall. The result? A flash knockout of **Ken Shamrock** in his first fight back. If Chute Boxe could turn a broken-down Sakuraba into a threat on his feet, it's no wonder they could turn men like Wanderlei Silva and Mauricio Rua into the kings of Pride's incredibly deep middleweight (205 pounds) division.

Clinch

The clinch is where grappling and striking meet, a phase of fighting as technically complex and nuanced as any ground fighting position (see **positional hierarchy**) and just as important. When two fighters are locked together standing — whether in a collar-and-elbow tie-up, a **Muay Thai** neck clinch, a rear clinch, or in some configuration of overhooked and underhooked arms — the live crowd's attention sometimes tends to drift, and unless you're listening to a first-rate announce team, it can be difficult to discern what, exactly, each fighter is working for by slipping an arm here, turning his hips there.

Broadly speaking, strikers might be looking for powerful knees to the head or body — think **Anderson Silva** mauling poor **Rich Franklin** — or the kind of short hooks and uppercuts from a single-collar tie that **Randy Couture** has made a career out of. Grapplers are likely to look for trip takedowns (Couture again), hip or shoulder throws (**Hayato Sakurai**, **Karo Parisyan**), or to initiate submissions (**Rumina Sato's** flying **arm bar**, **Renzo Gracie's** **guillotine** on **Pat Miletich**). A well-rounded mixed martial artist, of course, looks for all of these opportunities the clinch provides at once. Think **Fedor Emelianenko** tying up **Mirko Cro Cop**, turning in for a hip throw, which Cro Cop blocks only for Fedor to land a powerful hook as he re-squares his hips. Or, again, the great Randy Couture, arguably the best clinch fighter in the game, whose dirty boxing sets up his outside leg trips beautifully.

The clinch can be used defensively by a grappler looking to buy some time against a better striker, or a striker looking to avoid a superior grappler's takedowns. It can be used offensively by a grappler who wants to take the fight to ground, or a striker who wants to get close and stay close while he works his man over. It's perhaps the least appreciated aspect of the fight game — by fans, not by fighters who understand that fights can be won or lost in the clinch.

Coleman, Mark

Nickname: The Hammer

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205-245

Born: 12/20/64

Debut: UFC 10 (7/12/96)

Career Record: 16-10

Notable Wins: Don Frye (UFC 10, Pride 26); Dan Severn (UFC 12); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals); Mauricio Rua (Pride 31)

Notable Losses: Maurice Smith (UFC 14); Pete Williams (UFC 17); Pedro Rizzo (UFC 18); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride 16); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride Total Elimination 2004, Pride 32); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride 29); Randy Couture (UFC 109)



1992 **Olympian** Mark “The Hammer” Coleman revolutionized MMA and helped usher in the era of the wrestler. Before Coleman, amateur **wrestling** had been represented by **Dan Severn**. Severn was an excellent wrestler in his day, but by the time he fought **Royce Gracie** at **UFC 4** he was already in his mid-thirties. With his baggy black trunks and his old-school mustache, Severn looked more like your favorite uncle than a killing machine.

Coleman was different. He was 250 pounds of muscle and while Severn was clearly uncomfortable dealing damage after a takedown, Coleman had no such compunctions. When he took a man down, the attack that followed was savage and brutal. Writers needed a new term to describe what Coleman did; they settled on “**ground and pound**.”

Coleman looked unstoppable. For the first time since Gracie, a fighter appeared to have found a magic formula for success. Over the course of two UFC tournaments and a Super Fight to win the UFC heavyweight title against Severn, Coleman rewrote the book on what it took to succeed in the Octagon.

When Coleman faced **Extreme Fighting** champion **Maurice Smith** at **UFC 15**, he was beyond a heavy favorite. Smith was a kickboxer with limited takedown defense. Conventional wisdom said Coleman would hardly break a sweat. But Smith had identified a weakness. If you could survive the initial storm, Coleman would tire quickly and be nearly helpless. Smith won a de-

cision, a loss that sent Coleman's career into a tailspin. Even the most famous head kick of all time, a knockout blow delivered by the **Lion's Den's Pete Williams**, failed to wake Coleman up. A subsequent loss to Pedro Rizzo sent Coleman searching for answers.

Coleman found himself in Japan, regaining his spot at the top of the sport. But first, he had to hit rock bottom. Coleman allegedly agreed to lose a match to **Pride** star **Nobuhiko Takada** in exchange for money he needed to make ends meet. Coleman was a family man by then and wasn't making it with the UFC's paltry paydays. The money allowed him to concentrate on getting his career back on track and he made the most of his new lease on life.

The win over Coleman wasn't enough to propel Takada back into prominence. He was done as a main event draw. To replace him, Pride looked to have one man run through a gauntlet of the best fighters in the world. They called their tournament the Pride 2000 Grand Prix and it was an all-star gathering of the greats: Coleman, **Mark Kerr**, Takada, **Royce Gracie**, **Kazushi Sakuraba**, and **Igor Vovchanchyn**. When the dust settled, Coleman was kneeing Vovchanchyn over and over again in the head, on his way to being crowned the top fighter in the world. Three years after losing his UFC title, Coleman had scratched and pulled his way back to the top.

His stay at the top didn't last long. A new generation of heavyweights had come along, too skilled on the ground for Coleman to utilize his patented

In Their Own Words: Mark Coleman on changing the rules of the game

"I think eventually the head butt would have been taken out anyway, but the way I used it so effectively definitely sped up the process. I think I had a say in how fast it was eliminated in the way I used it. But it was obviously going to be eliminated eventually and I agree that it had to be eliminated eventually for the sport to get where it's at. The knees on the ground and the head butt had to go. Everything was new to me and I was just excited the sport had started up. I was relatively naive. I was content with the weapons that I had. I didn't feel I needed to add any weapons, but all of a sudden when they did eliminate the head butt, I was way behind in the game. I had a lot of catching up to do. I hadn't improved my game at all because I felt what I had was enough to win just about any fight. When the head butt was gone, it became a completely different sport. I definitely prefer the older rules and feel I am a better fighter with no rules. But I'm glad they added them or the sport wouldn't even be around today."

ground and pound without falling victim to a submission. **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** and **Fedor Emelianenko**, the two most dominant heavyweights in history, both finished Coleman with an **arm bar**. As a serious contender, Coleman was finished. There were several more memorable moments, including a win over **Chute Boxe's Mauricio Rua**, followed by a post fight donnybrook, and an emotional embrace with his daughters after a second loss to Emelianenko.

In 2008, Coleman was inducted into the UFC Hall of Fame. It was a fitting tribute for a fighter who revolutionized the sport. But it was just a prelude to Coleman's return to the Octagon. Coleman was scheduled to fight **Brock Lesnar** at UFC 87, but a knee injury forced him to pull out of the match. Preparing for Lesnar helped Coleman realize that he was no longer able to handle a giant wrestler of Lesnar's caliber. The former dominant heavyweight, now 44 years old, decided to drop 30 pounds and compete as a light heavyweight for the first time in his career.

Coleman impressed the UFC brass with a spirited loss to Rua in his 205-pound debut, winning Fight of the Night and plenty of respect. He won his next fight against **Stephan Bonnar** and appears to be ready to fight into his late forties. Despite his diminished physical presence, Coleman is still a good enough wrestler to give anyone pause. In a stacked division, Coleman won't lack willing opponents, fighters looking to challenge themselves by taking out a legend. These young lions will find The Hammer waiting and willing, ready to knock them down a peg on his own path back to championship glory.

Correira, Wesley

Nickname: Cabbage

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 260 lbs

Born: 11/11/78

Debut: Rings: USA (7/22/00)

Career Record: 19-14

Notable Win: Tank Abbott (UFC 45)

Notable Losses: Tim Sylvia (UFC 39); Andrei Arlovski (UFC 47); Tank Abbott (ROTR 7)

Hawaiian Wesley "Cabbage" Correira was once considered the toughest man in the sport, the proud owner of a chin that made him impossible to knock-out. But, this never made Correira a great fighter. **Tim Sylvia** beat him to a pulp at **UFC 39**, but he never hit the mat, no matter how many times he got hit.

Correira's top feud was with the famous street fighter **Tank Abbott**. During Abbott's woefully dismal return to the cage early in the **Zuffa** era, he was fed to a number of rising prospects. When he fell to Correira at UFC 45, the Hawaiian did his trademark cabbage patch dance. Abbott's entourage was incensed and a near riot ensued in the cage.



Abbott had his revenge almost two years later on Correia's home turf in Hawaii's Blaisdell Arena. This time a huge Abbott right hand knocked Correia cold. After five years of taking punishment, Cabbage's chin had taken all it could handle. He's still a staple on the local scene, but after losing a bout with **Antonio Silva** for **EliteXC** in 2007, Cabbage's days as a national level performer may be over.

Côté, Patrick

Nickname: The Predator

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 2/29/80

Debut: UCC Proving Ground 8 (11/3/02)

Career Record: 13-6

Notable Wins: Kendall Grove (UFC 74); Ricardo Almeida (UFC 86)

Notable Losses: Tito Ortiz (UFC 50); Travis Lutter (*The Ultimate Fighter 4* Finale); Anderson Silva (UFC 90)

A five-year Canadian Army veteran who served in Bosnia, Patrick Côté has a little bit of everything in his fighting background. **Judo**, **boxing**, **Muay Thai**,



wrestling, Brazilian Jiu-jitsu — Côté has done it all. But his success as a mixed martial artist boils down to two factors: his toughness and his big right hand.

Côté stepped into the cage on a mere four days' notice to make his **UFC** debut against **Tito Ortiz**, who was just two fights removed from a three-and-a-half-year light heavyweight title reign. To say Côté was out of his depth in only his sixth professional fight would be an understatement, but to his immense credit Côté kept coming forward and went the distance in a match he had no business even being a part of. Despite this promising first showing, success at the UFC level eluded Côté, who seemed more at home in second-tier organizations against more modest opposition.

Côté was selected as a competitor on "The Comeback" fourth season of ***The Ultimate Fighter***. Although he dropped the tournament final to submission expert Travis Lutter, Côté earned a spot in the UFC with his strong showing throughout the series, and a four-fight winning streak saw Côté emerge as a title contender in the company's slightly thin middleweight division. Côté managed to take a listless **Anderson Silva** into the third round for the first time in Silva's UFC career, but Côté's night ended early when he blew out his right knee throwing a kick. The fight was an unmitigated disaster. Was Silva bored,

uninterested in the bout? Or was he overly cautious of the power in Côté's right hand? Côté, of course, likes his chances in a rematch, should it ever happen. But who would watch it?

Couture, Randy

Nickname: The Natural, Captain America

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205-225 lbs

Born: 6/22/63

Debut: UFC 13 (5/30/97)

Career Record: 18-10

Notable Wins: Vitor Belfort (UFC 15, UFC 49); Maurice Smith (UFC 15.5); Pedro Rizzo (UFC 31, UFC 34); Chuck Liddell (UFC 43); Tito Ortiz (UFC 44); Tim Sylvia (UFC 68); Mark Coleman (UFC 109)

Notable Losses: Enson Inoue (Vale Tudo Japan 98); Josh Barnett (UFC 36); Ricco Rodriguez (UFC 39); Vitor Belfort (UFC 46); Chuck Liddell (UFC 52, UFC 57); Brock Lesnar (UFC 91); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (UFC 102)

Randy Couture is MMA's living legend. He's defied size, strength, and the ravages of time to inspire fans and fellow fighters alike. Even a cynical comedian like **UFC** color commentator **Joe Rogan** can't help but look on in wonder, a tear in his eye, and say, "That man is my hero."

Couture is the perpetual underdog. At every step of his UFC career he's been expected to lose. At every opportunity he defies those expectations. It started at UFC 15. After winning the UFC 13 tournament, Couture was brought back specifically to be fed to the sharks, in this case, "The Phenom" **Vitor Belfort**.

Belfort was the UFC's darling, a young, handsome, and outrageously muscular fighter who ended his fights with lightning fast punches. He was their dream UFC champion and the promotion expected him to easily run through the 34-year-old wrestler on his way to a title shot.

Instead, Couture used what had just been a few weeks' worth of Army **boxing** training he had at Fort Rucker, Alabama, to confuse and disorient Belfort. Combining his Greco-Roman **wrestling clinch** with his short rabbit punches, Couture took advantage of what would become his trademark style: dirty boxing.

A two-time NCAA wrestling runner-up at Oklahoma State and twice an Olympic alternate, Couture could control almost any man alive in the clinch position. It turns out adding punches into the mix only made his wrestling more effective. In his next bout, just the fourth of his MMA career, Couture became the UFC heavyweight champion, defeating kickboxer **Maurice Smith** — who would later become Couture's standup trainer — in a grueling decision win at UFC Japan.

Couture was rising in stature as the UFC was sinking nearer and nearer bankruptcy. The company simply couldn't afford to pay Couture the \$80,000 they had promised him. Rather than take a drastic pay cut and defend his newly won title, Couture walked away. He had a surprisingly unsuccessful tenure in Japan, losing three times by submission and never really impressing in his three decision wins.

Three years after being stripped of the title, Couture received a call from then-UFC matchmaker **John Perretti**, offering him an opportunity to come back and fight for the title against fellow wrestler **Kevin Randleman**. For a purse of \$85,000, Couture agreed to step into the Octagon once again. His next contract dispute would be for much higher stakes.

Couture's win over Randleman was a turning point in many ways for the entire sport. UFC 28 was the first UFC event sanctioned by the state of New Jersey and the sport was still very much on provisional status. When the Commissioner of the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board Larry Hazzard saw Randleman and Couture, two NCAA All-Americans and world-class athletes, it did more than anyone had imagined to convince him that MMA was a real sport and much more than a bar room scuffle. As always, Couture was the perfect ambassador for the sport of MMA.

This time, Couture stuck around long enough to defend his title. After two great fights (and two wins) over perennial contender Pedro Rizzo, Couture ran into a big problem — literally. He had wrestled in college at 190 pounds and was succeeding in MMA's heavyweight division at a relatively lithe 220 pounds. This was fine against kickboxers like Smith and Rizzo or even a wrestler like Randleman who was starting from an even smaller base than he was. Against giants like **Josh Barnett** and **Ricco Rodriguez**, it was a major problem. Couture held his own against both men, but when the lesser (with the exception of girth) fighters got on top of him, there was little he could do. He lost his heavyweight crown to Barnett, regained it when Barnett subsequently tested positive for **steroids**, and then immediately lost it again to Rodriguez.

At a crossroads, Couture made the decision to drop down to 205 pounds where **Tito Ortiz** was the longtime kingpin of a talent-stacked division. Because of Tito's refusal to fight his former training partner **Chuck Liddell** (actually an extended contract renegotiation between Ortiz and the UFC) Couture's first fight at light heavyweight would be against Liddell and would be for the interim title. Liddell was close friends with UFC President **Dana White**, who saw Couture as simply a stepping-stone to get the title into Liddell's hands.

"The Iceman" Liddell had the mega-star entrance, complete with a light show, unheard of in a promotion that had been pinching pennies for years, a



spectacle straight out of pro wrestling that included a special remixed version of Vanilla Ice's "Ice, Ice Baby." Then Couture beat him at his own game, keeping the dangerous knockout puncher off balance with his own standup attack before taking him down and forcing a stoppage in the third round. Just weeks before his fortieth birthday, Couture was again the champion of the world. Or at least the interim champion; he solidified his claim against a returning Ortiz, literally spanking MMA's bad boy on his way to a five-round decision.

After trading the title with his old nemesis Vitor Belfort, Couture was part of another seismic shift in the MMA landscape. UFC landed a spot on cable television, a reality television show called ***The Ultimate Fighter***. Couture and Liddell were the coaches. Not only would the show offer two lucky fighters a six-figure UFC contract, but it would also build up a huge rematch between Couture and Liddell. **Zuffa** officials were confident that weeks of television would leave viewers hungry to see the two coaches square off. It was a brilliant concept and brilliant execution. The rematch at UFC 52 was the promotion's most lucrative show ever, both at the box office and on pay-per-view. This time Liddell came out on top with a first round knockout. He won

In Their Own Words: Randy Couture on why losing can be a good thing

"If the worst thing that happens to you is you lose a fight, you're doing pretty damn good. I don't see that as a negative. It's all part of a learning and growing process. I think the adversity of losing that fight is going to be very important in your development as a fighter. I know from my own experience that the fights that I've lost were very important to me. If I could go back and change them, I don't think I would. I think I learned more and became a better person and a better athlete for having experienced those things."

the rubber match at UFC 57 as well, again by knockout, and Couture announced his retirement in the cage.

Like many retirements in combat sports, it didn't stick. One year later, Couture was back in the cage and back in the heavyweight division. Months after the release of *Rocky Balboa*, a movie that saw a middle-aged Sylvester Stallone come back to challenge the heavyweight champion, Couture lived out the film's plotline in his real life. Even the fictional movie didn't want to strain credibility with the viewers — the writers just had Rocky surviving the fight, hanging in valiantly and losing a decision. The 43-year-old Couture wasn't limited by what would seem plausible. He went out and took the title from **Tim Sylvia**, winning all five rounds, the fans standing and cheering voraciously throughout.

It *was* the perfect ending to a storybook career. Or should have been. Instead, after winning a title defense against **Gabriel Gonzaga**, Couture entered into an extended contract dispute with the UFC. When the company couldn't come to terms with **Fedor Emelianenko**, Couture's heavyweight counterpart in the defunct **Pride** promotion, Couture wanted out. His time as a fighter was coming to an end and he wanted Fedor before he retired. A vicious battle took place, with dueling press conferences, unprecedented financial information leaked, and insults flying right and left.

Realizing the dispute could linger in the legal system for years, Couture went slinking back to the UFC. Now 45 years old, he didn't seem like the same fighter. He lost to **Brock Lesnar** at UFC 92 and dropped a decision at UFC 102 to **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** in his adopted hometown of Portland, Oregon. Again feeling outgunned as a heavyweight, he made the drop back down to 205 pounds. At 46, Couture shows no signs of slowing down. After UFC 102

he announced he had signed a new six-fight contract. The eternal warrior will continue to fight until he is 48 years old — and perhaps beyond.

Cox, Monte

Monte Cox is a man of many hats. Working as a newspaper editor in the Quad Cities, Cox saw dollar signs when he went to his first MMA show. Soon he was promoting his own events, the popular **Extreme Challenge** shows where, in his own words, he “made out like a motherfucking bandit.” Before long, he left the newspaper business behind to make his living in the fight game.

Cox was more than the promoter of local events. He was also an agent, starting with local star **Pat Miletich** and expanding his business exponentially as a better and better class of athlete came to train with the **UFC** welterweight champion in Bettendorf, Iowa. Cox’s multiple roles were handy for him and the fighters he had handshake deals with. (There were no contracts with Cox. If you didn’t like how he was conducting business, you were free to leave.) As a promoter, he always had plenty of fighters to fill out his shows. Conversely, as a manager, he could always find his guys plenty of fights. Some would call this a conflict of interest — including the federal government, had the fights Cox was promoting been boxing instead of MMA — but his fighters never seem to complain about the arrangement.

Like everyone in the business, Cox suffered through the dark ages, as politicians and cable companies declared war on the sport. He weathered the storm very well. With his carny charm and connections in the state’s boxing community, Cox was able to get MMA legalized in Iowa — Extreme Challenge was safe. He also had a special relationship with UFC matchmaker **John Perretti**, making sure his fighters always had a spot on the UFC cards. Cox has made a mint in the sport of MMA. He is a millionaire but maintains the loyalty of his cadre of fighters, who are generally not making big money, by being extremely generous. When **Jens Pulver** came to Iowa to train with Miletich, he lived for months with Cox at his home. A lot of Cox fighters have similar stories. Cox doesn’t just sign existing stars; he builds them, helping their careers from the very beginning. Because of these relationships, Cox became MMA’s first mega-agent. He controlled many of the sport’s very best, including almost every fighter from the Midwest, like **Matt Hughes**, Pulver, and **Tim Sylvia**. In all, Cox has managed seven UFC champions.

In 2008, after years of being self-employed, Cox became the CEO of M-1 Global. Despite his wearing a suit for the first time in his life, the venture was an abject failure. Designed to promote M-1 fighter **Fedor Emelianenko**, the promotion fizzled when Fedor chose to fight with **EliteXC** instead. Like a cat, Cox

landed smoothly on his feet. He quickly switched gears to promoting his own Adrenaline MMA, a slightly larger scale version of Extreme Challenge. And, of course, he still has his massive roster of fighters, making sure Cox will be involved in every promotion worldwide for the foreseeable future.

Cro Cop, Mirko

Real name: Mirko Filipovic

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 226 lbs

Born: 9/10/74

Debut: K-1 Andy Hug Memorial (8/19/01)

Career Record: 37-7-2 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride Shockwave 2002); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride Final Conflict 2003); Josh Barnett (Pride 28, Pride 30, Pride Final Conflict Absolute); Kevin Randleman (Pride Shockwave 2004); Mark Coleman (Pride 29); Hidehiko Yoshida (Pride Critical Countdown Absolute); Wanderlei Silva (Pride Final Conflict 2009)

Notable Losses: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Final Conflict 2003); Kevin Randleman (Pride Total Elimination 2004); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride Final Conflict 2005); Mark Hunt (Pride Shockwave 2005); Gabriel Gonzaga (UFC 70)

“Right kick hospital, left kick cemetery.” That’s how former Croatian anti-terrorist police officer (hence “Cro Cop”) Mirko Filipovic once described his game, and for a large portion of his career spent as the heavyweight division’s most feared striker, it was bang-on. But championship gold eluded Cro Cop throughout much of his **Pride** tenure, and disaster struck in the **UFC** stint that followed it. As his career winds down, Mirko Cro Cop’s legacy is largely one of unrealized potential — that, and a highlight reel filled with stomach-turning head kick knockouts.

Although far too many mixed martial artists are described as having “K-1-level striking,” it’s no exaggeration in the case of Mirko Cro Cop, who competed for Japan’s premier kickboxing organization for years, earning wins over the likes of Jérôme Le Banner, Mike Bernardo, Peter Aerts, **Mark Hunt**, **Bob Sapp**, and Japanese star Akio “Musashi” Mori. Late in his K-1 run, however, Cro Cop began to transition to MMA, and debuted with a quick cut-stoppage win over iron-headed wrestler **Kazuyuki Fujita**. Professional wrestlers were common opponents for Cro Cop in the early days: add **Nobuhiko Takada**, Yuji Nagata, **Dos Caras Jr.**, and Yoshihisa Yamamoto to the list of cannon fodder Pride ran out there to help build their new star.

There was more serious competition, too. Stopping a luchador on strikes early in the first round is one thing; managing the same against the likes of **Heath Herring** and **Igor Vovchanchyn** is quite another. But Cro Cop made it all



look easy with his thunderous kicks and top-notch takedown defense, a combination that set the standard for heavyweight **sprawl and brawl**. It proved too much for the always game but badly undersized **Kazushi Sakuraba**, who took on Cro Cop in a headlining match at Tokyo's massive National Stadium. Cro Cop left with the win. Sakuraba left with a fractured orbital bone.

When Cro Cop met the great **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** for the Pride interim heavyweight championship in 2003, it was yet another instance of the classic striker versus grappler matchup. Cro Cop easily evaded Nogueira's takedown attempts throughout the first round, and landed some horrific kicks to the body, all setting up a left head kick that connected an instant before the bell. Nogueira looked understandably dazed as he slowly rose to his feet and stumbled towards his corner. But Nogueira put Cro Cop on his back with his first takedown attempt of round two, and the striker looked like a fish out of water. Quickly mounted by the finest heavyweight submission artist the sport has ever seen, Cro Cop was caught in an **arm bar** as he turned to avoid a barrage of punches, and he signaled his submission in his first championship bout.

It was a setback, but there could be no shame or embarrassment in being tapped out by Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira. It was all part of the learning process, the slow transformation from kickboxer to true mixed martial artist. Under the tutelage of **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** ace **Fabricio Werdum**, a refocused Cro Cop worked to improve his ground defense, to ready himself for his next title shot — which was surely just around the corner. A stunning upset loss to the wildly inconsistent **Kevin Randleman** in Pride's 2004 Grand Prix, however, put his title dreams on hold once again. Cro Cop would avenge that loss (by submission, if you can believe it) before the end of 2004 — a year in which he fought an impressive eight times. But the knockout loss to Randleman created doubts about Cro Cop's chin, which had previously been unassailable.

Cro Cop was deemed sufficiently rehabilitated for a second title shot after rattling off seven consecutive wins against opposition of varying quality. Pride put such promotional effort into their heavyweight knockout king that by the time he stepped into the ring to face **Fedor Emelianenko**, the unstoppable Russian almost seemed the underdog. But Emelianenko pressured Cro Cop throughout their three-round contest, backing him up, unloading with his wild, looping punches, and engaging in sporadic but effective **ground and pound**. Cro Cop lost the unanimous decision, but the few good shots he connected with that night left their mark: at the post-fight press conference, Fedor looked like he'd been hit by a truck.

Since the loss to Emelianenko, it hasn't been the same. The build-up to that second title challenge was exhilarating, but Cro Cop has never managed that kind of momentum since. He finally earned his first major mixed martial arts title with a victory in Pride's 2006 Open Weight Grand Prix, and while that is hardly an achievement to be scoffed at, you can't help but look at his road to the title with a slightly raised eyebrow. First, there was **Ikuhisa Minowa**, an entertaining but middling middleweight. Then, the ancient and

really fat **Hidehiko Yoshida**, whose famously awful knees couldn't withstand the barrage of leg kicks Cro Cop had in store. In the same night, Cro Cop put away the smaller but, of course, ferocious **Wanderlei Silva** with a devastating head kick, and **Josh Barnett**, who had just gone the distance with Nogueira. Cro Cop had decided to retire if he came up short in the Open Weight Grand Prix, and his tournament win has to be counted as a victory over self if nothing else, but surely it was cold consolation after coming up short against Emelianenko for the real prize.

After the demise of Pride, the UFC unsurprisingly came calling. But Cro Cop's UFC career has been nothing short of disastrous. After a tune-up fight against poor Eddie Sanchez, Cro Cop was knocked out — by a head kick, no less — by **Gabriel Gonzaga** in a fight that destroyed his mystique permanently. Bouncing back and forth between the UFC and **Dream**, Cro Cop now wins some and loses some. But the time when the most feared heavyweight striker on the planet was, incongruously, the same man who came to the ring to the strains of Duran Duran is long gone.

Cruz, Dominick

Nickname: Dominator

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 135 lbs

Born: 9/3/85

Debut: Rage in the Cage 67 (1/29/05)

Career Record: 15-1

Notable Wins: Joseph Benavidez (WEC 42); Brian Bowles (WEC 47)

Notable Loss: Urijah Faber (WEC 26)

The reigning WEC bantamweight champion is one of the most unique fighters in the sport. He's perhaps the fastest fighter in the game, and in a sport filled with guys content to swing wildly, Cruz focuses on not getting hit. He isn't

In Their Own Words: Dominick Cruz on his fighting style

"I always wanted to have a style that would catch someone's eye. There's so many good fighters and you have to stand out some way. My outlook on this is that we're wearing four-ounce gloves, and four ounce gloves aren't very forgiving. So my mindset is to get hit as little as possible.

I thought if I don't get hit at all in a fight, how can I lose? I decided to make my feet as fast as I could and make my footwork ridiculous because Muhammad Ali always preached about it, so it's got to work."

afraid to move backward, feint, and pitter-patter his way to victory with lots of fast and accurate punches.

The title win over Bowles was textbook Cruz. He faked kicks, teased Bowles by sticking his head forward, then cracked counter punches when Bowles came forward swinging wildly. Cruz's footwork is unique, a combination of meth head's herky-jerkiness and Bruce Lee's kung fu wizardry. It was enough to confuse Bowles and will likely cause Cruz opponents fits for years to come.

Cummo, Luke

Nickname: The Silent Assassin

Height: 6'

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 4/27/80

Debut: Ring of Combat 1 (10/12/02)

Career Record: 6-6

*In Their Own Words: Luke Cummo on the **Ultimate Fighter** experience*

"I won't lie and say it was peaches and cream the whole time we were there. Six weeks with no outside contact got pretty rough at times and I missed my friends and family a lot. I'm the type of person that thrives under a strict regimen. The times when I get into trouble are after fights when I have nothing to do except play video games and eat junk food. The public got a glimpse of this after my bout against Anthony Torres when I ate myself into a food coma.

"On the show we trained twice a day almost every day. We were there for one reason and that was to fight. As a fighter, that was the best environment for me to practice and get better. I really improved mentally and physically while training on *TUF 2*. All we did was sleep, train, and eat. When people go to Thailand to train [in] **boxing** or Brazil for jiu-jitsu, that is what they do. You can get a lot of experience in a condensed amount of time. We also had some great coaches like Ganyao Fairtex, Peter Welch, Mark Laimon, and Matt Hughes brought in **Jeremy Horn** who is amazing.

"As for being picked last, I didn't need any more motivation than having to fight. I know that someone somewhere is training with every ounce of energy that they have, and their ultimate goal is to kick my ass. That is my motivation and it's something that comes from the deepest region of my brain. It's similar to 'fight or flight,' except that strategy comes into play when competing in sport."

Notable Win: Josh Haynes (UFC 69)

Notable Loss: Joe Stevenson (*The Ultimate Fighter 2* Finale)

Luke Cummo dresses like a ninja before his fights. Luke Cummo reads comic books, wears glasses, and looks like a bully's wet dream. Luke Cummo also kicks plenty of ass.

Cummo, a **Matt Serra** student, was the last fighter picked during the second season of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** reality show. That ended up being a huge mistake for coaches **Matt Hughes** and **Rich Franklin**, as Cummo proved everyone wrong, making it to the *TUF 2* finale. He did more than just show up for that fight too; he gave the favored **Joe Stevenson** all he could handle.

His post-*TUF* career is significant mostly because of the revelation that he drinks his own urine. Cummo believes that recycling his urine allows hormones and minerals a second chance to arrive at their destination in the body. This unusual diet hasn't helped Cummo achieve a winning record in the Octagon, but has secured his place as one of MMA's world-class weirdos.



Danzig, Mac

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 1/2/80

Debut: Extreme Challenge Trials (10/7/01)

Career Record: 19-8-1

Notable Win: Tommy Speer (*The Ultimate Fighter 6* Finale)

Notable Loss: Hayato Sakurai (Pride 33)

When the sixth season of *The Ultimate Fighter* began, it looked as though the field consisted of former **King of the Cage** lightweight champ Mac Danzig . . . and then everybody else. Sure, Danzig hadn't looked great losing his title to Clay French (albeit by split decision), and he looked worse getting tossed around the **Pride** ring by the bigger, better, and more experienced **Hayato Sakurai**, but he didn't need to be better than Sakurai to win a **UFC** contract. He needed to be better than such luminaries as Richie "The Dirty Samurai" Hightower and the man who would come to be known simply, if inexplicably, as **War Machine**. Danzig kept his distance from the usual *TUF* shenanigans and pranks, and seemed to approach the competition with an air of confidence that bordered on a sense of superiority. And Danzig did indeed prove superior, living up to his reputation as a stand-out grappler by breezing through the tournament with four first-round submission wins. He has found little success in the UFC since, however, with only a win over Marc Bocek to show against tough losses to **Clay Guida** and Josh Neer. An outspoken vegan, Danzig became the first professional mixed martial artist to appear in a PETA print ad.

D'Arce: see **Arm triangle**

Davie, Art

Art Davie is the man behind xARM, a hybrid combat sport that he describes as a combination of "the best of hard-core arm wrestling, kickboxing, and jiu-jitsu." Nuts and gum, together at last! Fortunately for everybody, Davie

has had better ideas in the past — like the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, for instance. Davie read a 1989 *Playboy* magazine profile of **Rorion Gracie** that called him “the toughest man in the United States,” and he was intrigued. With his advertising background, Davie helped Gracie market his *Gracies in Action* tapes, a series of videos in which the Gracies demonstrated the effectiveness of their family’s system by styling on small-time martial artists on camcorder. Davie’s idea was simple: why not offer the same kind of fighting to an audience bigger than whoever happened to show up at the dojo the day it got stormed? Davie, Gracie, and John Milius — yes, *that* John Milius, the man who directed *Conan the Barbarian* — put together the idea for a tournament they wanted to call “The War of the Worlds.” They shopped the project around to a number of thoroughly uninterested pay-per-view providers before getting lucky with **Semaphore Entertainment Group** (SEG). SEG put aside the Mexican wrestling and demolition derby pay-per-views they’d been considering — they were sold on Davie’s pitch. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Davis, Marcus

Nickname: The Irish Hand Grenade

Height: 511”

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 8/24/73

Debut: ISCF Friday Night Fights (8/22/03)

Career Record: 16-4

Notable Win: Chris Lytle (UFC 93)

Notable Losses: Joe Stevenson (*The Ultimate Fighter* 2); Mike Swick (UFC 85)

When you pull the pin on a hand grenade, there is a slight delay before it explodes. Marcus Davis’s **UFC** career worked the same way. It was slow starting, but after dedicating himself to mixed martial arts following *The Ultimate Fighter* 2, “The Irish Hand Grenade” exploded right to the cusp of contendership in the UFC’s 170-pound division.

For Davis, the key to success was commitment to the sport. The competitor fans saw on *The Ultimate Fighter* was a boxer dabbling with MMA. The new Irish Hand Grenade was a cross-trained killing machine.

A former professional boxer (17-1-2 career record), Davis realized he had no real future in that sport when he couldn’t beat 30-something journeyman Ed Bryant. He tried MMA with limited success, realizing quickly that he would need more than boxing to thrive. He learned submissions from Jorge Gurgel, and — more important to his long-term success as a UFC favorite — learned quickly what **Zuffa** valued in a fighter and in a fight.

In Their Own Words: Marcus Davis on boxing vs. MMA

“**Boxing** is one-dimensional. You can get away with being lazy and win on just natural athletic talent. The only thing boxing has helped me with is my timing and my punching technique and has given me bad habits for MMA that I have had to unlearn. MMA is much tougher – way more facets to the sport. I have concentrated on my weaknesses. I surround myself with people who will criticize every detail. Jorge Gurgel has tightened up my ground game to the point that I hang with black belts and don’t get submitted. **Mark DeLaGrotte** has been the glue to putting my striking together with my **wrestling** and grappling. I am confident in the cage and don’t care where the fight ends up.”

Davis, an American by birth who was two generations removed from the Emerald Isle, took on the identity of an Irish scrapper. He helped the UFC introduce MMA to Europe, fighting seven times in a row overseas. While he never threatened to be the best fighter on a card, he always did his best to be the most exciting. Davis made \$160,000 in post-fight bonuses for Fight, Submission, and Knockout of the Night in his overseas fights, exceeding his actual contracted payday for those fights.

More than any other fighter in the UFC, Davis exemplified the struggle between pure sport, contests waged between men who put winning ahead of everything else, and a Zuffa-encouraged, bomb-throwing spectacle. UFC executives believed fans, especially fans new to the sport like those in Europe, preferred an old-fashioned donnybrook to a nuanced technical battle. Soon Davis, and similar fighters who would never be champions and had nothing to lose, would make gentleman’s agreements to make their fights as exciting as possible. That mentality, and the cash bonuses in place to encourage fighters to favor style over substance, created dynamic standup exchanges. It also started a slippery slope away from pure sport, as fighters often cared more about entertaining fans than winning.

Dean, Herb

Although a professional mixed martial artist himself — a light heavyweight with a 2–3 pro record compiled in various second-tier promotions — it’s as a referee that Herb Dean has made his mark. Dean is among the steadiest hands in the game, certainly one of the top referees working today. In fact, he’s probably the best. But no referee is ever without his critics, and Dean in recent years has been



dogged — largely unfairly — by a reputation for stopping fights prematurely. In a sport that carries with it the risk of serious, life-altering injury, it's obviously better to err on the side of caution, and take the chance of stopping fights a little too early rather than too late (see **Mazzagatti, Steve**). But it's a fine line.

Dean came under fire for his role in the **UFC 61** meeting between **Tito Ortiz** and **Ken Shamrock**. The enormously successful third season of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** built up the rematch between these old rivals for months, and many were understandably disappointed to see the fight stopped only 1:18 into the first round. Ortiz delivered five unanswered, unopposed elbows from inside Shamrock's **guard**, and Dean decided he had seen enough of the obvious mismatch. But Shamrock jumped to his feet immediately, insisting he hadn't been in any real trouble, the fans felt cheated, and Dean was widely criticized for stepping in when he did.

Dean, however, defended his decision. "I believe he was unconscious," he later told **Sherdog**. "I think he was out with the first one. At that critical time, he was unable to defend himself. I was certain of that. I can't think of another reason to take five elbows without doing anything else." The Nevada State Athletic Commission supported the call, but the **UFC** responded to Shamrock's complaints and to general fan sentiment, airing a third and final Shamrock/Ortiz bout live on Spike TV. This result was virtually identical, with referee **John McCarthy** calling a stop to the match after a half-dozen unanswered punches from Shamrock's guard in 2:23. You can take that as

vindication of Dean's stoppage in their second fight, or you can consider it completely unrelated. Either way, Dean is unconcerned. "I'm going to have to make calls that people aren't going to be happy about," he told Sherdog. "That's my job. I can't do what everyone else wants. It's my conscience."

Dean's finest moment in the Octagon came in another bout that appeared, at least at first glance, to be stopped too soon. When **Frank Mir** started working an **arm bar** on **Tim Sylvia** in their UFC 41 title fight, something didn't quite look right. Sylvia's arm wasn't completely extended, and his elbow wasn't quite past Mir's hips — the usual fulcrum over which an arm is extended in an arm bar — but Herb Dean rushed in to stop the match as the fighters continued to struggle. "Oh, shit!" Dean exclaimed, "Stop! Stop! Stop! The fight is over!" Sylvia, in apparent disbelief, couldn't understand why the fight had been stopped. "It's fucking *broken*," Dean explained. "Your arm is broken." Dean was right: Sylvia had suffered a serious injury. But Sylvia initially denied it, and until the replays ran, no one in the arena beside the three men in the ring had any idea what had happened. The crowd was livid.

But regardless of what the crowd wants to see, a good referee is going to stop the fight when he sees what he needs to see. And when it's Herb Dean in the cage, it's almost always going to be the right call.

Deep/ZST

At first glance, the partnership between second-tier Japanese promotions Deep and ZST ("Zest") might not seem particularly significant. On the surface, it's two tiny organizations that run tiny shows in tiny halls — usually with tiny fighters — agreeing to share their talent and their modest promotional resources in a move with minimal impact on the broader world of MMA. But look a little closer, and you see that the Deep/ZST alliance has a lot to say about the state of the sport in Japan given the history of each promotion. And the history of each promotion is bound up in their respective in-ring rules.

ZST follows a unique set of rules focused on fast-paced action. To that end, it prohibits the closed **guard**, forcing bottom players to work a much more active open guard, and promotes tag team bouts, which, while intriguing in theory, are somewhat less so in practice. Just as strangely — ok, *almost* as strangely — ZST makes gloves optional and bans strikes to the head on the ground. It's this last rule that helps tell the tale. ZST operates largely in the tradition of **Akira Maeda's** pioneering **Rings**, and serves as a kind of proving ground for fighters on their way to the high-profile K-1 organization's **Hero's** brand, which operated under Maeda's direction.

Deep, on the other hand, with its more aggressive rules calling for soccer kicks and stomps to a downed opponent, had an intimate relationship with **Pride**. The companies were in fact deeply intertwined: Deep President Shigeru Saeki also served as a public relations officer for Pride parent company Dream Stage Entertainment.

The partnership between Deep and ZST, then, mirrors the partnership between K-1 and former Pride executives that took shape in after the sale (or death, if you prefer) of Pride led to the formation of **Dream**. While MMA in North America continues to grow at a breakneck pace, the sport has fallen on hard times in Japan, and consolidation, rather than competition, has sometimes become an increasingly attractive option for the parties involved. And that appears to be as true of the Deeps and ZSTs of the world as it is on the level of the big-time players.

DeLaGrotte, Mark

Mark DeLaGrotte did more than walk down the street to his local **karate** dojo in his pursuit of martial arts perfection. He traveled all the way to Thailand and lived among the people, learning Thai fighting directly from the masters of the art. He studied under Kru Yodtong at the Sityodtong Boxing Camp. Not only did he learn the fight game, but the language as well, allowing him a deeper understanding of the Thais and their culture.

Returning home, DeLaGrotte opened up a satellite Sityodtong school in Boston where he helps bring the art of Thai boxing to the American people. Along the way, his ability to break down opposing fighters (and build up his own students) has attracted some top talent to his gym. Complete with his trademark hats and loud Boston accent, DeLaGrotte can be found in the corner of many New Englanders, dispensing advice, at times penetrating and keen, but often merely obscene. He was the kickboxing instructor for ***The Ultimate Fighter*** 4, but is probably best known for cornering top **UFC** fighters **Kenny Florian** and **Marcus Davis**.

DeSouza, Tony

Nickname: The Peruvian Savage

Height: 6'

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 7/26/74

Debut: CFF: Cobra Classic 2000 (8/26/00)

Career Record: 10-4

Notable Wins: Luiz Azeredo (Meca World Vale Tudo 11); Dustin Hazelett (UFC: The Final Chapter)

Notable Losses: Jutaro Nakao (UFC 33); Thiago Alves (UFC 66)

Peruvian Tony DeSouza combines black-belt level **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** with excellent **wrestling** and an even better beard. Viewers of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** will remember him as Team Penn's wrestling coach from the show's fifth season. When contestant Noah Thomas seemed to be taking his training too lightly, it was DeSouza's job to straighten him out on the mat. DeSouza's career as an active fighter seems to have come to a close following knockout losses to dangerous striker **Thiago Alves** and fellow grappler Roan Carneiro, but his influence is seen whenever a fighter employs the Peruvian necktie, a modified **guillotine choke** of DeSouza's invention. Tony DeSouza is *that* Peruvian.

Diabate, Cyrille

Nickname: Snake	Height: 6'6"
Weight: 205 lbs	Born: 6/10/73
Debut: Golden Trophy 1999 (3/20/99)	Career Record: 16-6-1
Notable Wins: Bob Schrijber (2H2H 5); James Zikic (EF 1)	
Notable Losses: Renato Sobral (Cage Rage 9); Mauricio Rua (Pride Final Conflict Absolute)	

Cyrille Diabate is perhaps the toughest man in all of France. Although that may sound like damning him with faint praise, Diabate is plenty tough. He has the perfect kickboxer's frame. He's tall and wiry and his elbows seem unusually sharp. When the fight remains standing, he's a threat to anyone in the world at 205 pounds. It's when the fight goes to the ground that things get a little dicey.

Diabate had his highest profile fight for Pride in 2006, when he was stomped out by an in-his-prime **Mauricio Rua**. Since then it's been smaller fish on smaller shows, but a stint as **Dan Henderson**'s striking coach on ***The Ultimate Fighter 9*** got Diabate thinking about making his first appearance in the Octagon. At 36, it's now or never for the flashy Frenchman to make his mark at the highest level of the game.

Diaz, Nate

Height: 6'	Weight: 155 lbs
Born: 4/16/85	Debut: WEC 12 (10/21/04)
Career Record: 12-5	
Notable Wins: Joe Hurley (WEC 21); Manvel Gamburyan (<i>The Ultimate Fighter 5</i> Finale)	
Notable Losses: Hermes Franca (WEC 24); Clay Guida (UFC 94); Joe Stevenson (<i>The Ultimate Fighter 9</i> Finale)	

In Their Own Words: Nate Diaz on his confrontation with Karo Parisyan during *The Ultimate Fighter 5*

"I didn't like his attitude when he was on the show, man. He wasn't being very respectful. He kept touching me, grabbing my shoulder and fucking slapping my back and shit. I was cool with him at first because I knew his cousin. But he doesn't know me. You just don't start touching people you don't know. He ain't my boy. So I was like, 'Bro, what the fuck are you doing? Don't fucking touch me.' And he said, 'Are you serious?' And I said, 'Hell yeah, I'm fucking serious.'

"That's when he tried to act all hard. On TV they didn't even show it all. Before that he was being disrespectful to **Jens [Pulver]**. He was clowning Jens a little bit when Jens is the coach. It's his thing. I know your cousin is there and he's fighting but you don't just walk in like you own the place."

Diaz was the winner of ***The Ultimate Fighter 5***, but kind of by default. He was actually being controlled by judoka Manny Gamburyan until Gamburyan separated a previously injured shoulder and had to quit. It was not the strongest start to his **UFC** career, but Diaz made the best of it, winning his first four fights on his way towards fringe contender status.

Nate, like his brother **Nick Diaz**, brings a certain edge to the UFC that is often missing in shows filled with homogenous MMA fighters showing respect and expecting heated feuds to end in the cage with a smile and a handshake. To Diaz, things that happen in the cage are real. He doesn't believe in contrived feuds and fake smiles.

Diaz is just as willing to settle differences outside the cage, and what you see from him is always real, never put on for effect. Fans saw this attitude put into action when Diaz got into a shouting match with UFC welterweight star **Karo Parisyan** during the filming of *The Ultimate Fighter 5*. Parisyan was the established star, but Diaz refused to back down, ready and willing to fight him in front of the cameras and the world at the UFC Training Center. Combine this attitude with an exciting style that earned him three Fight of the Night bonuses and you have a fighter that **Zuffa** can count on to provide an exciting fight on any card.

After his early win streak that made many in the industry consider him a potential future champion, Diaz has settled towards the middle of the pack in the lightweight division. Consecutive losses to **Clay Guida** and **Joe Stevenson**, bigger wrestlers who held him down, moved Diaz from pay-per-view broadcasts back to Spike TV.

Diaz, Nick

Nickname: Bad Boy

Height: 6'

Weight: 155-185 lbs

Born: 8/2/83

Debut: IFC WC 15 (8/31/01)

Career Record: 22-7-1

Notable Wins: Robbie Lawler (UFC 47); Frank Shamrock (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Diaz)
Hayato Sakurai (Dream 14)

Notable Losses: Karo Parisyan (UFC 49); Diego Sanchez (*The Ultimate Fighter 2*
Finale); K.J. Noons (EliteXC: Renegade)

Nick Diaz is certifiable. Every fighter is a little crazy; it takes a certain kind of person just to step into the cage. Diaz, however, takes it to a new level. He was so upset by his loss to Joe Riggs at **UFC 57** that he actually fought his opponent after the show just to set things straight. The catch? Both men had been taken to the hospital to recover from the grueling battle. The rematch went down in hospital gowns.

For any other fighter, that's a career defining moment. For Nick Diaz, it was just another fight. He once threw a shoe at **Diego Sanchez** prior to a fight, he taunted K.J. Noons and his family mercilessly during their feud, and he fought one of the world's best lightweights, **Takanori Gomi**, while stoned out of his mind on marijuana. Nothing Diaz could do would surprise MMA fans. He's unpredictable and that's a big part of his charm.

Diaz is more than just a goofy character. He's also a very good fighter. Diaz is a Cesar Gracie black belt who is competitive with anyone on the ground, but he uses those skills primarily as a deterrent from being taken down to the ground. Diaz prefers to stay standing, using his **boxing** prowess to win fights. It's an unusual style, especially for MMA, where many fighters try to take advantage of the smaller four-ounce gloves to throw nothing but



In Their Own Words: Joe Riggs on his hospital fight with Nick Diaz

"It wasn't too much of a fight inside the hospital. He actually did hit me, and I dropped to my knees in the hospital. But then I got up, and we were running around. We were like over and under hooks, and we were rabbit punching each other in the back of the head. He was . . . toe-stomping me, trying to bite me, and I was worried more about my IV coming out, to be honest with you. It was weird, but it turned out all right."

Interview courtesy of Insidefight.com

haymakers. Diaz takes a different route, throwing punches in volume and pitter-pattering away with a lot of jabs and short shots. He almost never puts everything into a single punch, instead counting on sheer numbers to overwhelm his opponents.

The result is often a compelling, fan-friendly fight. Diaz has been in some of the most exciting fights in MMA history, including action-packed contests with Sanchez, **Karo Parisyan**, and Gomi.

Diaz is also a regular and vocal marijuana advocate. He has a medical marijuana card and legally smokes weed in California. What is legal in a court of law, however, is not legal in a prizefight. Diaz had his biggest career win, over Gomi, turned into a no contest after testing positive for marijuana. He also had to remove himself from an August 2009 **Strikeforce** fight with Jay Hieron for the company's welterweight title when the state of California demanded he take a drug test on short notice. Soon after, Diaz announced his intention to box professionally, to test his standup skills against a better breed of striker.

Dos Caras Jr.

Real name: Alberto Rodriguez II	Height: 6'4"
Weight: 220 lbs	Born: 5/25/77
Debut: Deep 2nd Impact (8/18/01)	Career Record: 7-4
Notable Win: Kengo Watanabe (Deep 2nd Impact)	
Notable Loss: Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Bushido 1)	

Alberto Rodriguez II was born to be a wrestler. It runs in his blood. His father and uncle are two of Mexico's all-time best and he was guaranteed success based on his pedigree alone. Of course, his father and uncle were never Olympic standouts or NCAA champions. They are professional wrestlers, bet-

ter known to **wrestling** fans on three continents as Dos Caras and Mil Mascaras. Rodriguez is wrestling royalty, but before he turned pro and joined the family business, he wanted to test himself on the amateur circuit.

Success quickly followed. At 6'4" and a chiseled 215 pounds, Rodriguez was good enough to join the Mexican national wrestling team and do well in international competition. The main American competition in his weight class was future **UFC** champion **Randy Couture**. Rodriguez was a shoo-in for the Olympic team in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, but Mexico decided not to field a team. Instead, Rodriguez turned pro, becoming the masked sensation Dos Caras Jr.

Despite his legendary family, Dos Caras Jr. didn't immediately click as a pro wrestler, lacking that innate charisma possessed by the great ones. His name did open some doors in Japan where promoters wanted him to try his hand at MMA, fast surpassing **pro wrestling** as a spectator event in that country. Dos Caras Jr. (wearing a modified lucha libre mask) made his MMA debut for **Deep** in 2001, beating highly touted **Pancrase** prospect Kengo Watanabe with a suplex that broke the Japanese fighter's arm.

Caras Jr. continued against a comical collection of pro wrestling castoffs in Deep before being thrown to the wolves in his **Pride** debut. With two weeks' notice he fought the most feared heavyweight in the world — knockout artist **Mirko Cro Cop**. He wanted to take his mask off for this fight, but promoters thought it would be a better visual to leave it on. His impaired vision cost him. Cro Cop's legendary left leg ended Dos Caras Jr.'s night in less than a minute.

Dos Caras Jr.'s career as a serious martial artist was over after a subsequent loss to journeyman **Kazuhiko Nakamura**. He still dabbles in the occasional MMA match, but his day job as a pro wrestling main eventer keeps him plenty busy.

dos Santos, Junior

Nickname: Cigano

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 235 lbs

Born: 9/12/84

Debut: 7/16/06

Career Record: 11-1

Notable Wins: Fabricio Werdum (UFC 90); Mirko Filipovic (UFC 103); Gilbert Yvel (UFC 108); Gabriel Gonzaga (UFC Live: Vera vs. Jones)

Notable Loss: Joaquim Ferreira (MTL-Final)

While explosive wrestlers like **Cain Velasquez** and **Shane Carwin** get all the attention, Junior dos Santos quietly lurks, waiting for his opportunity at the **UFC** heavyweight title. It's interesting that dos Santos has been able to fly under the radar. After all, heavyweights with knockout power tend to attract

In Their Own Words: Dana White on Junior dos Santos

"Dos Santos came bursting onto the scene. He's done some big things. He's an exciting fighter. He trains with Nogueira. He could have gone in there and shot and tried to take (fights) to the ground. He didn't. He stood toe-to-toe with **Mirko Cro Cop** and tried to knock him out. And eventually he did. He's an exciting fighter and I'm really excited about our heavyweight division right now."

the eye. But dos Santos is as quiet and as mild mannered as a church mouse, so despite five knockouts in five UFC fights, he hasn't yet developed a significant fan following. That will no doubt change as he adds bigger and bigger names to his hit list.

A student of **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, dos Santos is alleged to have outstanding skills on the ground. No one has seen them in the Octagon yet though, as a powerful jab and a steady diet of strikers have allowed him to keep the fights standing. That won't be the case when he faces some of the division's top wrestlers. For all his boxing prowess, Cigano's career arc will depend on how well he defends takedowns and how well he defends off his back. In a real sense, dos Santos will be only as good as his grappling allows him to be.

Double wrist lock: see **Kimura** and **Americana**

Dream

The death of **Pride** was a serious disappointment for fans of Japanese MMA, especially the way it just sort of fizzled out with the lackluster Pride 34: Kamikaze card headlined by **Jeff Monson** and **Kazuyuki Fujita**. It hardly seemed a fitting end to a promotion that had staged many of the most spectacular events the sport had seen. Fortunately, a proper send-off was just around the corner, as former Pride executives collaborated with Fighting Entertainment Group (FEG), the company behind K-1 and **Hero's**, to promote Yarennoka!!, a New Year's Eve 2007 card in the best tradition of Japanese year-end blowouts. Pride's welterweight Grand Prix champion **Kazuo Misaki** took on Hero's villain **Yoshihiro Akiyama** in an incredibly heated contest, submission ace **Shinya Aoki** faced debuting Korean **judo Olympian** Jung Bu-Kyung, and **Fedor Emelianenko** squared off against Hong-Man Choi in a meaningless freak show match. *This* was more like it.

Six weeks later, FEG announced that Hero's was finished, and "the great dream alliance" that produced Yarennoka!! would continue its collaboration under the name Dream. The optimism was palpable at a press conference that featured every significant Japanese fighter who had been a part of either Hero's or Pride. But Dream has had a hard time maintaining their early momentum, and shaky television ratings have left Tokyo Broadcasting System executives unimpressed. Through their first two years of existence, Dream has been touch and go.

The promotion has embraced links with American organizations, first **EliteXC** and then **Strikeforce**. They've maintained the Japanese mania for the Grand Prix, whether featherweight, lightweight, welterweight, middleweight, or Super Hulk (see: **Canseco, Jose**). Their first 11 events all featured tournament bouts of one kind or another. And then things got weird. As though conceding that the **UFC**'s vision of the sport was the only viable way forward, Dream abandoned years of Pride and Hero's tradition by discarding the ring in favor of a hexagonal cage, and moved to a system of three five-minute rounds, rather than the ten-five-five split familiar from Pride. What's next, a ban on soccer kicks?

Despite Dream's best efforts, Japanese interest in the sport has cooled considerably from Pride's peak, and it doesn't look set to rebound any time soon. Although Dream looked destined to emerge as a power to rival the UFC at the time of its formation, just two years later that seems impossible.



Edgar, Frankie

Nickname: The Answer

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 10/16/81

Debut: Ring of Combat 9 (10/29/05)

Career Record: 12-1

Notable Wins: Sean Sherk (UFC 98); B.J. Penn (UFC 112)

Notable Loss: Gray Maynard (UFC Fight Night 13)

It was one of the biggest upsets in **UFC** history. Frankie Edgar was small, often encouraged by the UFC brass to cut down to 145 pounds and try his hand at competing in the **WEC**'s featherweight division. He lacked one-punch knock-out power. And there was no way he was going to take down and submit the legendary **B.J. Penn**. In short, Edgar winning the UFC lightweight title was next to impossible. Odds makers agreed; Edgar was a +600 underdog. That means a \$100 bet on Edgar would have scored a brave soul \$600 if they had the courage to wager on Edgar in his UFC 112 title challenge. Of course, fights aren't won or lost in the sportsbook. That only happens in the Octagon, where Edgar out-hustled, out-boxed, and out-worked Penn on his way to a unanimous decision.

Frankie Edgar may be the UFC's most improbable champion ever. He wasn't even considered a good enough prospect to make it onto ***The Ultimate Fighter*** reality show. **Dana White** and UFC Vice President **Joe Silva** auditioned him, but he didn't make the cut, though other natural 155-pound fighters like **Kenny Florian** and **Diego Sanchez** appeared on the show. Silva saw enough in him to bring him into the fold, but it was no easy path to the title. In his first Octagon appearance, Edgar survived a deep and dangerous **Tyson Griffin knee bar** on his way to a decision win.

It was one of three Fight of the Night performances for Edgar, who combined an expanding striking game with his collegiate-level **wrestling**. His only setback was a decision loss to Gray Maynard in 2008, but Edgar rebounded with convincing wins over **Hermes Franca** and **Sean Sherk** on his way to a title

In Their Own Words: Frankie Edgar on refusing to tap to Tyson Griffin

"I didn't think about it then. I felt I was up on the judge's score cards and knew there wasn't a lot of time left. That isn't to say I would never tap, but I was willing to let him pop my knee out, to give that up, to get the 'W.'

"Would I ever tap? I don't know, man. Right now I can say yes. For sure I would. But in the middle of a fight with all the adrenaline? I'm a pretty competitive person. I guess we'd have to find out. Hopefully we never will."

shot. Clean-cut and personable, Edgar became the second fighter signed by **Georges St. Pierre's** agent Shari Spencer. With a championship reign to his credit, Edgar is now on his way to GSP-level success. With Spencer at his side, he could be on his way to GSP-level endorsement opportunities as well.

Edwards, Yves

Nickname: The Texas Gunslinger

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 8/30/76

Debut: WPC 1 (10/26/97)

Career Record: 37-16-1

Notable Wins: Aaron Riley (HOOKnSHOOT: Showdown); Hermes Franca (UFC 47); Josh Thomson (UFC 49)

Notable Losses: Rumina Sato (SuperBrawl 17); Caol Uno (UFC 37); Joachim Hansen (Pride Bushido 9); K.J. Noons (EliteXC: Return of the King)

The inventor of Thugjitsu, Houston's Yves Edwards is one of the fastest and most fluid strikers in MMA history. His early career included an amazing pair of fights with Aaron Riley for HOOKnSHOOT, fights so good they earned both men a shot at the **UFC**. He was the uncrowned UFC lightweight champion when the promotion had dropped the title, beating a series of tough opponents and culminating his run with one of the most memorable knockouts the sport had ever seen.

Holding Josh Thomson in a waist lock, Edwards shoved him forward. As Thomson spun around to face his opponent, Edwards's shin was right there waiting for him. It was a once in a lifetime knockout.

While his striking made him dangerous, it was his submissions that made him world-class. Early in his career, Japan's **Rumina Sato** submitted Edwards in just 18 seconds. This loss convinced Edwards to focus harder on his mat game,

and by the time he was in his prime he was as likely to finish a fight with an **arm bar** as he was with a punch. In fact, of his 27 decisive wins, only 13 were by knockout. Fourteen were by submission, making Edwards a remarkably well-rounded fighter.

After so many grueling battles early in his career, Edwards struggled just as the sport started to grow. His fights were still entertaining, but more and more he was on the losing side of the docket. His fight with Norwegian juggernaut **Joachim Hansen** at **Pride Bushido 9** seemed to drain him. Edwards lost six of his next ten and never again appeared to be a title contender.



Einemo, Jon Olav

Height: 6'6"

Weight: 225 lbs

Born: 12/10/75

Debut: Focus Fight Night 4 (10/6/00)

Career Record: 6-1

Notable Win: James Thompson (2H2H: Pride & Honor)

Notable Loss: Fabricio Werdum (Pride 31)

Jon Olav Einemo is one of Europe's top heavyweights, but he has never made a firm commitment to MMA. He's one of the very best grapplers in the world, winning the prestigious Abu Dhabi Combat Club grappling championship in 2003. However, that success hasn't translated to the top levels of MMA competition.

With Einemo, there are constant rumors. He is always about to sign with **UFC**, **Pride**, **Dream**, you name it. If there's a major promotion in the world, Einemo has been rumored to appear there. It almost never comes to fruition.

Injuries and a regular job have kept him from pursuing MMA as a vocation. As he approaches his mid-thirties, the time for Einemo is now or never. With the expansion of MMA in Europe just beginning, it seems likely that Einemo will find another opportunity to make a run at making fighting a career and not just a hobby.

EliteXC

In short, EliteXC was a disaster. Despite drawing more viewers for their top matches than any other promotion in U.S. television history, the company went out of business within two years of its founding, after piling up \$55 million in losses. Start anywhere you'd like: the terrible deal with Showtime that meant the company lost money on every show it ever aired on the cable channel; the acquisition spree that saw them mindlessly snatch up four promotions and invest in a fifth (losing \$18 million dollars on **Cage Rage** alone); the decision to build around a 30-something backyard brawler with no chin; or the allegations of fight fixing that helped to bring it all crashing down in the end. Any way you approach EliteXC, any angle you take, it all comes back to that single word: disaster.

The coup de grace came days after Heat, EliteXC's third and final Saturday night CBS event. After the wobbly eared **James Thompson** almost proved too much for EliteXC meal ticket **Kimbo Slice** in the company's network debut, a safer foe was needed. **Ken Shamrock** — a big name from the sport's early days who hadn't won in over four years — fit the bill perfectly. But at the eleventh hour, Shamrock decided to hold out for more money. When he was rebuffed, the famously short-fused Shamrock erupted and went too hard in a sparring session trying to blow off steam. He was cut and couldn't be medically cleared to fight. Kimbo needed an opponent, and the best EliteXC could come up with on such short notice was the workman-like **Seth Petruzelli**, a light heavyweight scheduled to compete on the undercard. In a video posted later that night on YouTube, **UFC** color man **Joe Rogan** called the fight as it happened, hanging out backstage at a comedy club in Atlanta. "Seth Petruzelli is fighting Kimbo Slice. This is a last-minute replacement. I gotta think Seth Petruzelli is gonna fuck him up. If I'm wrong, you'll never see this."

But we saw it, all right. Kimbo came dashing in and was floored by a weak jab thrown off one leg and pounded out in 14 seconds. As if this wasn't enough of a disaster for EliteXC, Petruzelli gave a radio interview two days later where things started to sound more than a little fishy: "The promoters kind of hinted to me and they gave me the money to stand and trade with him. They didn't want me to take him down. Let's just put it that way. It was worth

my while to try and stand up and punch with him.” If that was true, it was illegal. Although a Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulations investigation made no finding of wrongdoing, Petruzelli and EliteXC executives Jeremy Lappen, Gary Shaw, and Jared Shaw (a.k.a. rapper \$kala on MySpace) couldn’t seem to get their stories straight about what exactly was offered and why. In the end, it didn’t matter. If EliteXC had tried to fix the fight, it hadn’t worked anyway.

EliteXC died days later. **Strikeforce** scooped up a few worthwhile assets, including **Gina Carano**, the sport’s biggest (and only) female star, and soon thereafter announced their own deal with both Showtime and CBS. You’ve got to think they’ll have a better network run than EliteXC — if for no other reason than that things couldn’t possibly go any worse.

Emelianenko, Aleksander

Nickname: The Grim Reaper

Height: 6’6”

Weight: 258 lbs

Born: 8/2/81

Debut: Pride Bushido 1 (10/5/03)

Career Record: 17-3

Notable Wins: Pawel Nastula (Pride Shockwave 2005); Sergei Kharitonov (Pride Final Conflict Absolute)

Notable Losses: Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Final Conflict 2004); Josh Barnett (Pride Total Elimination Absolute); Fabricio Werdum (2H2H: Pride & Honor)

Although he’s not without his detractors, heavyweight legend **Fedor Emelianenko** is widely regarded as one of the classiest fighters in the game. His younger brother Aleksander, however, served the better part of a five-year sentence for armed robbery — he has the prison tattoos to prove it — and it’s rumored that he was forced to withdraw from a scheduled **Affliction** bout against **Paul Buentello** after testing positive for hepatitis B in his pre-fight medical. None of that is particularly classy.

The hepatitis story is a strange one. While it has never been officially substantiated or confirmed by the California State Athletic Commission, Emelianenko has curiously confined himself — or been confined — to fighting in Russia ever since his Anaheim fight was called off only moments before the competitors were about to weigh in. Although the hepatitis story was widely reported, the CSAC would only say that Emelianenko failed to meet the medical standards for licensing. Emelianenko, for his part, denies that there was any problem at all with his test results, and claims that his removal from the Affliction card was simply a question of mishandled paperwork.

Since then, this heavy-handed **sambo** player has continued to hover just outside the heavyweight top ten. But with seemingly no one and nowhere to fight aside from second-rate opposition in second-tier promotions, it's hard to know what kind of future Emelianenko has in the sport. It's an unfortunate turn of events for a fighter who showed such promise from the moment he made his MMA debut in the **Pride** ring. Emelianenko is a finisher, with only two decisions in over 20 professional fights, and only three losses, all against absolutely first-rate competition. There's got to be a market for a heavyweight like that — if he's clean.

Emelianenko, Fedor

Nickname: The Last Emperor

Height: 6'

Weight: 231 lbs

Born: 9/28/76

Debut: Rings: Russia vs. Bulgaria (5/21/00)

Career Record: 32-2 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Ricardo Arona (Rings: King of Kings 2000 Block B); Renato Sobral (Rings: 10th Anniversary); Heath Herring (Pride 23); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride 25, Pride Shockwave 2004); Mark Coleman (Pride Total Elimination 2004, Pride 32); Kevin Randleman (Pride Critical Countdown 2004); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Final Conflict 2005); Tim Sylvia (Affliction: Banned); Andrei Arlovski (Affliction: Day of Reckoning)

Notable Losses: Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (Rings: King of Kings 2000 Block B); Fabricio Werdum (Strikeforce: Fedor vs. Werdum)

Ask other professional mixed martial artists who they see as the top fighter in their sport, and Fedor Emelianenko's name comes up more often than any other. Dangerous from any position, in any phase of the fight, Emelianenko has dominated his division like none before him. With only one legitimate loss in over 30 fights, two frighteningly dominant performances against the great **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, and decisive wins over five former **UFC** champions, there's no question the humble and soft-spoken Emelianenko is MMA's most accomplished heavyweight. Some, like **UFC** legend **Randy Couture**, have gone so far as to praise Emelianenko as the top pound-for-pound fighter in the world. But while Couture and Nogueira — both of whom join Emelianenko on the short list of the greatest heavyweight fighters to ever step into the ring or cage — continue to test themselves against top competition in the twilight of their careers, Emelianenko has chosen a different path. It's a path that has frustrated fans, potential opponents, and, not least of all, **UFC** President **Dana White**, who has tried and failed to land the biggest free-agent prize in the game on more than one occasion. Despite the millions of dollars White has put on



the table, Emelianenko has proven he has different priorities.

When he began his career, however, it was all about the money. After his stint in the Russian army, Emelianenko was broke and fought out of sheer necessity. He'd completed the requirements for the International Master of Sports distinctions in both **judo** and its uniquely Russian offshoot **sambo**, and had medaled in the Russian national judo championships and a pair of prestigious world cup events. Earning a spot on the Russian national team was the realization of a long-held dream, but it didn't provide Emelianenko with enough to support his young family. **Akira Maeda's Rings** promotion did.

Emelianenko enjoyed considerable success in Rings, including wins over **Ricardo Arona** and **Renato Sobral**, despite competing under rules that limited his most dangerous offensive weapon — his unrivaled **ground and pound**. Emelianenko's time in Rings is most notable now, though, not for the ten matches he won, but for the lone match he lost. Seventeen seconds into the first round of his King of Kings tournament bout with rugged journeyman **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka**, Emelianenko was sliced open by an inadvertent but illegal elbow. The fight was stopped, and under a tournament format that precluded draws and no contests, "TK" was awarded the match. It would be ten years

before Emelianenko would taste defeat again.

Two fights into his Pride career, Emelianenko made his presence felt. Although it can be difficult to recall a time when **Heath Herring** would be favored in a bout with Fedor Emelianenko, that's how it was when the two met to determine the number-one contender for Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira's **Pride** heavyweight title. Ten brutal minutes later, when the doctors stopped the fight, play-by-play man **Stephen Quadros** spoke for many of us when he said, "I don't know that I've ever seen a more destructive fighter on the ground." Emelianenko offered further evidence to support this claim when he pounded Pride's great champion from inside the **guard** for almost the entirety of their three-round fight. Nogueira, the sport's most skilled heavyweight submission artist, managed sweeps late in rounds one and two, and half-threatened with **triangle choke** and **omoplata** attempts. But Emelianenko, who holds no rank in **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**, was never in any real danger as he teed off again and again, leaving a battered and disconsolate Nogueira in the arms of teammate **Mario Sperry** as they awaited the inevitable decision. A rematch ended disappointingly in a no contest on an accidental head butt, but their third encounter was as decisive as their first — and once again it fell in Fedor's favor.

Over the course of 16 Pride fights, Emelianenko was only in trouble a handful of times. There was the enormous right hand from **Kazuyuki Fujita** that had Emelianenko wobbling around the ring, his arms flailing — that match ended less than two minutes later with Fujita on the wrong end of a **rear naked choke**. There was the **Kevin Randleman** suplex, perhaps the most spectacular throw ever seen in mixed martial arts, that dumped Emelianenko on his head early in the first round. A minute later, Emelianenko swept and finished with a **Kimura**. There was the strange sight of Emelianenko underneath **Mark Hunt** and nearly arm locked, but that match too ended in a first-round Kimura for the champion. But that was as close to defeat as Emelianenko came. Not even the dangerous **Mirko Cro Cop** at the height of his powers proved to be much of an obstacle. If anyone was going to stop Emelianenko, the feared striker with top-notch takedown defense seemed most likely to do it. But Emelianenko pressured Cro Cop constantly, never allowing him to set himself and land one of his trademark head kicks. It was just one more dominant performance to add to the list.

It was only after Pride that things got weird. First, there was the **Matt Lindland** bout, contested while Emelianenko was still technically under contract to Pride, but permitted to fight in Russia for whomever he chose. He chose billionaire Calvin Ayre's upstart BodogFight, and fought in front of Russian president (and judo black belt) Vladimir Putin and action star Jean-Claude Van Damme, who

sat side by side and enjoyed a night at the fights while Moscow police cracked down on a group of pro-democracy protestors led by chess champion Gary Kasparov. After Emelianenko finished the undersized Lindland with an **arm bar** in the first round, he passed the remainder of the evening with Putin — and Van Damme, naturally — at the Presidential Palace.

After the death of Pride, Dana White was determined to bring Emelianenko on board for a heavyweight title unification match with then-champion Randy Couture. The deal proved impossible, however, when Emelianenko's management team, headed by M-1 Global's Vadim Finkelstein, made a series of unusual demands, including the construction of a stadium in Russia and co-promotion of any events in which Emelianenko was to appear. Another sticking point was Emelianenko's desire to continue to compete in combat sambo — a slightly more obscure, full-contact variant of the Russian grappling art. Negotiations broke down, and ultimately Emelianenko signed a contract with his management's own M-1 Global organization, and rather than facing Randy Couture in a dream fight, he took on the Korean giant Hong-Man Choi in a Japanese sideshow.

This was disappointing, to say the least. Fans and analysts began to grumble, some at Dana White for not getting the deal done, some at Emelianenko for choosing to fight the non-competition that remained in Japan rather than take on the UFC's best. The level of competition stepped up sharply, however, when Emelianenko agreed to headline **Affliction's** first foray into MMA against **Tim Sylvia**, who had fought eight times with some version of the UFC heavyweight title on the line over the previous five years. Emelianenko had already defeated former champs Kevin Randleman and **Mark Coleman**, but they were both very much on the down slope of their careers. The Affliction bout was our first look at Emelianenko in the ring against a former UFC champion who was still in his prime, or at least not that far removed from it. But the fight was over almost before it began: Sylvia was laid out and choked out in a mere 36 seconds. Sylvia's old rival, **Andrei Arlovski**, at least managed to put Emelianenko on his heels for a minute or so on the next Affliction card before he leaped into an Emelianenko overhand right to end the match just over three minutes into the first round.

Emelianenko accepted a fight against catch wrestler **Josh Barnett** in what should have been in his biggest challenge in years, but their fight — and ultimately the entire Affliction promotion — was sunk by Barnett's pre-fight positive test for anabolic **steroids**. Emelianenko's contract status again became the hottest story in mixed martial arts, and the UFC made every attempt to finally reel in the biggest fish in the pond. This time, minor details like whether

In Their Own Words: Fedor Emelianenko on fighting
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira

"Me and my team studied him (we watched all his fights) and I trained a lot on the ground before the fight. I trained a lot with lighter quicker fighters but I don't change my training regime for any fighter. For Nogueira I will train more on the ground, for Cro Cop more standup for instance, but the routine stays the same. I have great respect for him. I think he still is one of the best fighters in the world. He has a big fighter's heart!"

or not Emelianenko would be permitted to compete in combat sambo were not going to stand in the way of an Emelianenko/**Brock Lesnar** contest to determine the true number one heavyweight in the world. "He can go fight in sambo every fucking Thursday night if he wants to," Dana White told the press. But again Finkelstein would not back down from their demands for co-promotion, and left millions on the table.

Finkelstein and M-1 Global found the comparatively small-time **Strikeforce** much more amenable to the demands for co-promotion. And so Emelianenko found a new home with an organization that lacks the competitive depth and promotional muscle of the UFC, but that, through its CBS network television deal, can quite possibly expose him to an even wider audience. Millions of viewers were no doubt surprised to turn their dials to the Tiffany Network to find out that the baddest man on the planet was an affable, slightly chubby yet undersized Russian heavyweight with a sly smile clubbing his way out of danger against the enormous **Brett Rogers**. But that surprise was soon dwarfed by the utter shock MMA fans felt when they saw their greatest champion baited into a **Fabricio Werdum** triangle choke only moments into their Strikeforce contest. Emelianenko was forced to concede defeat for the first time in his career. True to form, the enigmatic Russian reacted to his first real loss with the same stoicism he had always shown in victory. "The one who doesn't fall," Fedor said through his interpreter, "doesn't stand up."

Erikson, Tom

Nickname: The Big Cat

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 285 lbs

Born: 7/6/64

Debut: MARS (11/22/96)

Career Record: 9-4-1

Notable Wins: Kevin Randleman (Brazil Open 97); Gary Goodridge (Pride 8)

Notable Losses: Heath Herring (Pride 11); Antonio Silva (Hero's 5)

Tom Erikson, a two-time junior college national champion and two-time NCAA All-American, was long considered the most fearsome fighter in MMA's heavyweight division. He beat **Kevin Randleman** and everyone else put in front of him and waited for a phone call from the **UFC** that never came.

Erikson was big and strong as an ox, but he also had a reputation for being dull. His fight with **Murilo Bustamante** was a 40-minute stall fest and the UFC was a little scared about putting him in front of a national audience. The promotion had a rule limiting the number of fighters they had from any particular style and had plenty of wrestlers already on the roster.

Instead, Erikson journeyed to Japan where he took exactly one fight a year. He beat **Gary Goodridge** at **Pride 8** and was expected to dispatch with **Heath Herring** just as easily at **Pride 11**. But by then Erikson was 36 years old and a little past his sell-by date. Herring outworked him, survived on the bottom, and finished Erikson with a **rear naked choke**.

It was the Big Cat's last significant fight. His only other moment of note was a **Pride 17** fight that saw him finish future boxing champion Matt Skelton with a big ham hock around the neck, squeezing his neck with a single fist, what the boys in the back laughingly called the "bitch choke." The move was banned before the next show, Erikson's contribution to the development of the MMA rulebook.

Evans, Rashad

Nickname: Sugar

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 9/25/79

Debut: Dangerzone: Cage Fighting (4/10/04)

Career Record: 15-1-1

Notable Wins: Brad Imes (*The Ultimate Fighter 2* Finale); Chuck Liddell (UFC 88); Forrest Griffin (UFC 92); Quinton Jackson (UFC 114)

Notable Loss: Lyoto Machida (UFC 98)

The fan perception of Rashad Evans was formed from a single comment on *The Ultimate Fighter 2*. Coach **Matt Hughes** took exception to Rashad having a bit of fun in the cage during Evans's fight with an overmatched Tom Murphy. Hughes accused Rashad of showboating, a label that has stuck to the Michigan-based wrestler ever since. Instead of seeing Evans as a rising star, fans view him as a cocky jerk, an unwelcome encroachment by a big-time, trash-talking modern athlete into their world of budo and "respecting the sport."

Evans won the six-figure contract that season by beating the gargantuan 6'7" Brad Imes in a closely contested final. A drop down to light heavyweight



and four straight wins followed before matchmaker **Joe Silva** decided Rashad was ready for stiffer competition. The former Michigan State Spartan wrestler had trouble taking down **UFC** legend **Tito Ortiz**. Ortiz outwrestled Evans and was on his way until he was penalized a point for grabbing the fence during an Evans takedown attempt. The fight was declared a draw, but everyone watching knew Ortiz had been the better man.

A rematch was scheduled to main event **UFC 78**, but Ortiz pulled out to film a season of *Celebrity Apprentice* with Donald Trump. Evans instead faced *Ultimate Fighter 3* winner **Michael Bisping**. It was a fight that many in the media and online didn't think was worthy of a **UFC** main event. Fans disagreed. The *TUF* winners were big stars to the fans who had seen them on Spike TV and the show drew surprisingly well on pay-per-view.

Evans won a closely fought split decision and the win earned him the biggest fight of his career. The **UFC** traveled to Atlanta for the first time for **UFC 88** where Evans fought **Chuck Liddell**. Liddell was the favorite, especially with the southern fans who let Evans know about their displeasure. When he knocked the former champion out with an overhand right that sounded like a gunshot, the arena fell into an eerie silence.

Liddell was the **UFC's** most popular fighter. Already disliked, beating Chuck didn't do much to make Evans any more popular. Winning the **UFC**

In Their Own Words: Rashad Evans on knocking out a legend

"I didn't really mind the boos that much, because that's what I expected. If I hadn't expected it, I might have gotten my feelings hurt. But I knew they would all be rooting for Chuck. I like Chuck, too. I was clapping and dancing to his music when he came out. I was going to have fun with it. I wasn't going to be like, 'Oh no! This is my death.' Being relaxed allowed me to fight the way I'm capable of fighting.

"My boxing coach Mike Winklejohn had me work on that overhand right over and over again. He's the best coach in the business. I was ready to hit it and hit it hard. It happened just like he said it would. I was trying to catch him. I was trying to get him to come out of his comfort zone. Usually he lets you chase him, but I had him frustrated by the end of the first round. He started to stalk me and catch me on the fence and that's when I thought I might catch him.

"It's good, man, but the thing about a highlight reel knockout is that one day you could be on the other end of that highlight. That's the reality of the situation."

light heavyweight title from the promotion's second most popular fighter, **Forrest Griffin**, didn't help the cause either.

Evans was being booed before fights at the weigh-ins, in the introductions, and after his victory celebrations. Pre-match nipple tweaking and in-cage dance displays furthered his image as an abrasive jerk. He wasn't. Backstage he was intelligent and affable, but that didn't stop fans from making him the least popular fighter since **Tim Sylvia**. Evans was so despised that even **Lyoto Machida**, a foreign fighter with a reputation for being a boring decision artist, was cheered for finally putting a check in the loss column, ending Evans's undefeated streak and taking his title.

Evans returned to action with a matchup fans were eagerly anticipating — a battle with fellow African American star **Quinton Jackson**. The fight would mark the first time two black fighters main evented a pay-per-view in the **Zuffa** era, and the UFC pulled out all the stops. The battle was promoted with a season of *The Ultimate Fighter* and later by the UFC's cutting edge *Primetime* specials on Spike. Labeled "black on black crime" by the personable Jackson, the fight sold more than one million pay-per-views, a tremendous success that should permanently kill the myth that black fighters don't sell tickets to MMA fans. Evans, resplendent in Tom Ford suits and designer shades, is fast becoming an MMA fashion icon, and with a dominating win over Jackson, he's become the top African American star in the sport as well.

Extreme Challenge

While the **UFC** struggled in the mid to late 1990s, battling with politicians and the cable companies, the sport of MMA was thriving on the grassroots level. It was most popular in the Midwest, in places like Iowa where **wrestling** was a religion. While **Pat Miletich** was the fighting face of the Iowa scene, the man pulling all the strings was **Monte Cox**.

Cox was the sports editor of the *Quad City Times*. He covered the local champion, Miletich, as he challenged all comers at an event in Chicago called the Battle of the Masters. Cox liked what he saw.

A boxer and promoter as well as a newspaperman, Cox took a chance on this new sport. Using Miletich as his main drawing card he held his first show on January 20, 1996. Called the Quad City Ultimate, the show drew almost 10,000 fans. Cox would later change the name of the event to Extreme Challenge.

Extreme Challenge is the longest running MMA promotion in America besides the UFC. Cox has promoted more than 500 shows on the local and regional level. Because of his role as a fight manager as well as a promoter, many of the top fighters in the world got their start in Extreme Challenge. Former Extreme Fighter competitors included future world champions like Miletich, **Matt Hughes**, and **Jens Pulver**.

Extreme Fighting

While the UFC was still struggling with developing time limits, still very much a promotion built on spectacle rather than sport, an early competitor was demonstrating what the future of mixed martial arts would look like. Extreme Fighting was ahead of its time; when the UFC was still booking freakshow fights and tons of mismatches, Extreme Challenge matchmaker **John Perretti** had a show that resembled modern MMA. The difference in quality was apparent. Perretti brought in some of the world's best, like **Ralph Gracie**, Igor Zinoviev, **Mario Sperry**, **Pat Miletich**, and **Maurice Smith**.

Many of the safety precautions and sporting aspects that are credited to **Zuffa** and **Dana White** were actually Perretti innovations. The sporting atmosphere, weight classes, rounds (which Perretti hilariously insisted be called "phases"), and rules we associate with today's UFC were mostly in place all the way back in 1995.

Like the UFC, Extreme Fighting struggled with political pressure. Their very first show in November 1995 had to be moved at the last minute from New York to North Carolina after threats to shut them down. Things got much worse. Extreme Fighting's second show was scheduled for Kahnawake,

In Their Own Words: John Perretti on the chaos in Montreal

"I turned myself in. I left my pregnant wife at home and turned myself in. I flew back to Montreal. Those were my boys. People who were fighting for me. I also will say a lot of people crapped out and got paid off not to come. They're a bunch of scumbags. I have physical fights with people over what happened in Montreal. [Former UFC owner] **Bob Meyrowitz** can laugh with me all day long. I like Bob a lot and consider him a friend. But he paid off fighters so they wouldn't show up to fight for me. One minute I have eight guys signed and the next minute I have eight who don't want to show. As soon as we announced who was fighting, the Ultimate came and paid them off.

"We were on a shoestring budget as it was. We were fighting all of Montreal. Customs stopped guys. Immigration wouldn't let guys in. I lost three quarters of my fighters. They confiscated our satellite. Donald Zuckerman in a last-ditch effort had another satellite brought in that they didn't know about. We hid it from them and they didn't know we had hooked it up."

a Mohawk Indian reservation in Quebec, Canada. Indian reservations would be an MMA mainstay for years, able to circumvent the law because of their special status and unique sovereignty. But in this case, the Canadian government was seemingly obsessed with shutting the show down. They couldn't stop the fights themselves, but they could prevent fighters from getting to the reservation and filed an injunction to stop the promotion from broadcasting via satellite.

As these MMA evangelists always seemed to do, Extreme Fighting found a way. Zuckerman, driving like a bat out of hell, got a new satellite truck on site. The event made the air, making Canadian government officials furious. Eight fighters were arrested. Eventually charges were dropped, but it was becoming clear that finding a place to stage these fights was only going to get harder. If you couldn't even fight on an Indian reservation in Canada, where could you fight?

As the promotion started to bleed red, Extreme Fighting continued to be a trendsetter, doing everything just a little bit better than the UFC. While **Dan Severn** and **Mark Coleman** were undeniably great wrestlers, Perretti scored a coup for his fourth card. For the first time two Olympic Gold Medalists would compete. Kenny Monday and Kevin Jackson were both victorious, lending their prestige and Olympic status to the continuing PR battle between no holds barred fighting and the government. It was too little, too late.

Just days after their fourth event, culminating with **Maurice Smith** knocking out Kazunari Murakami with a vicious right hand, Extreme Fighting was out of business.

They had run circles around the politicians, moving the show to places like Oklahoma that didn't have any rules preventing the fights from taking place. But they couldn't outwit the cable companies. The show was being removed from much of the pay per view universe, and without that income, the event just wasn't viable. Perretti was hired by the UFC as their main matchmaker, bringing with him most of Extreme Fighting's best fighters.

Ezequiel choke

A chokehold often, though not exclusively, executed from the mount, in which the attacker wraps one arm around his opponent's neck, places the opposite forearm across the throat, and scissors his opponent's neck between his forearms. Depending on the angle of attack, the Ezequiel can act on either the trachea or the carotid arteries. Although there are a variety of no-**gi** adaptations, the technique is far more common in gi grappling, where one of the attacker's hands can be inserted into or otherwise grasp the opening of the opposite sleeve for increased leverage. Known in **judo** as sode guruma jime ("sleeve wheel choke") or simply sode jime ("sleeve choke"), **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** players renamed the technique in honor of Ezequiel Paraguassu, a former Brazilian judo international, respected in both styles for his proficiency with his signature ne waza ("ground fighting") technique.

Because the gi plays an important role in most applications of the Ezequiel choke, it is rarely seen in MMA outside of Japan, where the traditional gi still maintains a presence in competition. The most famous — or perhaps infamous — Ezequiel choke in mixed martial arts came in **Hidehiko Yoshida**'s much disputed win over **Royce Gracie** in a special rules match at **Pride**'s massive Shockwave 2002 event. As Yoshida worked his way through Gracie's **guard** and into **mount**, he slipped his left arm around Gracie's head and grabbed the inside of his right sleeve with this left hand. Forcing his right arm across Gracie's throat, Yoshida leaned forward, tightening the hold — and obscuring the referee's view. As Gracie briefly lay motionless beneath him, Yoshida looked up at the referee and asked, "Did he pass out?" The match was stopped, and the livid Gracie sprang to his feet and protested immediately that he had neither passed out nor had he tapped. In the years since, every application of the technique calls to mind that moment in Tokyo National Stadium where the protests of one irate Brazilian were drowned out by the celebration of tens of thousands of rapturous Japanese.



Faber, Urijah

Nickname: The California Kid

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 145 lbs

Born: 10/14/79

Debut: Gladiator Challenge 20 (11/12/03)

Career Record: 23-4

Notable Wins: Dominick Cruz (WEC 26); Jeff Curran (WEC 31); Jens Pulver (WEC 34, WEC 38)

Notable Losses: Tyson Griffin (Gladiator Challenge 42); Mike Brown (WEC 36, WEC 41); Jose Aldo (WEC 48)

If Urijah Faber were a few inches taller and ten or twenty pounds heavier, he might very well have become one of the biggest names in the sport. A UC Davis **wrestling** standout with solid kickboxing and an ever-improving submission game, the easygoing “California Kid” has the kind of dynamic fighting style and natural charisma that stars are made of. But for much of his career, it didn’t matter how many thrilling fights he was involved in or how many tough opponents he stopped in what seemed like no time at all, nobody outside of the MMA hard-core had any idea who he was. Such is the life of a featherweight. When **UFC** parent company **Zuffa** bought **World Extreme Cagefighting** (WEC) in December 2006 and turned it into a showcase for the lighter weight classes, that changed — at least a little. It’s not like Urijah Faber became a household name all of a sudden, but at least he’d stopped toiling in *complete* obscurity.

After a fifth successful defense of his WEC title — a hard-fought decision win against the tough veteran **Jens Pulver** in one of the best matches of 2008 — it seemed like Faber would reign atop the featherweight division indefinitely. A dream match against Japanese superstar **Kid Yamamoto** was a long shot, but it was also one of the few fights that fans seemed to think might offer Faber a real challenge. Despite Faber’s wishes, that fight unsurprisingly never materialized, but a legitimate challenger soon appeared: **Mike Brown**. The heavily favored champion got caught with a right hook that sent him crashing to the

mat after attempting a flashy but risky reverse elbow. Unable to regroup, the champion was pounded out mid-way through the first round. Faber got back on track with a quick **guillotine choke** win in a return match against Pulver, and no doubt approached his much-anticipated rematch with Brown more seriously than he did their first encounter.

In the biggest fight in the history of the featherweight division, Faber and Brown put on an absolute classic, a back-and-forth battle that went the full five rounds and still left the crowd wanting more. Faber, who broke his right hand in the early going and later sustained an injury to his left, basically ran out of bullets, but fought on regardless. Although Brown deservedly won the match on all three judges' score cards, this was one of those relatively rare instances where there was a winner but no real losers. Faber came up short, but his reputation as one of the most exciting fighters in the sport grew even stronger. A poor showing in a subsequent title challenge against the seemingly unstoppable **Jose Aldo** spelled the end for Faber in the featherweight division, as he has chosen to ply his trade among the even more frenetic bantamweights.

Fertitta brothers

The Fertitta brothers, Frank Fertitta III and his younger sibling Lorenzo, were an MMA fan's dream come true. Heirs to the Station Casino business, the two brothers had aggressively turned their father's modest Las Vegas casino into a billion-dollar real estate and gambling enterprise. They were young, ambitious, and very, very rich. They also had a love for the sport of MMA, as well as close ties to the Nevada State Athletic Commission. If you were creating the perfect **UFC** owners from scratch, men who could see the UFC through tough times, get the sport approved in Las Vegas (and back on pay-per-view) they would look a lot like Lorenzo and Frank.

Although the MMA business is now a thriving international industry, things weren't quite as easy for the UFC's perfect owners as many imagined they might be. After buying the UFC from **SEG** for just \$2 million, they had a long road back to prosperity. The UFC, even the entire sport of MMA, was damaged goods. But the underlying premise, men testing themselves in the cage, was so promising that there was reason for confidence.

They met their goals early, getting the sport into Nevada and back on pay-per-view. But it had been half a decade since the UFC had been in the public limelight. The fans who stuck with the sport were passionate and loyal, but many others had forgotten all about MMA. Getting them to shell out \$30 for a pay-per-view turned out to be an enormous challenge.

After losing more than \$30 million, the Fertittas were ready to tap out in 2005. They had done all they could. They built their existing stars like **Tito Ortiz**, created a new star in **Chuck Liddell**, and brought back the legends of the past like **Ken Shamrock** and **Tank Abbott**. Nothing seemed to work.

When *The Ultimate Fighter* aired on Spike, it was a last-ditch effort by desperate men. They funded the show themselves, confident it would change things forever. The success was almost immediate. Pay-per-view records that had stood the test of time since the **Royce Gracie** era were falling monthly. Soon shows that had once drawn only 30–40,000 buys were bringing in ten times as many fans. The money-losing company of 2005 was estimated to be worth more than \$1 billion in 2008.

In the struggling economy, the UFC was soon outperforming the Fertittas' real estate and casino business. To keep up with the demands placed on an increasingly busy UFC President **Dana White**, Lorenzo Fertitta left Station Casinos to work full-time with the promotion in 2008. Confident that White had the United States under control, Fertitta turned his attention to the international market. The UFC has charged head first into the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada, and has its eye on a number of other foreign locales. Expect Fertitta to lead the company to fertile new ground like China, Brazil, Mexico, and even India. The promotion that had once been relegated to Indian casinos and the deep south is now going worldwide.



Figure four: see **Kimura** and **Americana**

Filho, Paulo

Nickname: Ely

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 5/24/78

Debut: Heroes 1 (7/24/00)

Career Record: 20-1

Notable Wins: Yuki Kondo (Deep 2nd Impact); Amar Suloev (Pride Bushido 6); Kazuo Misaki (Pride Bushido 13); Chael Sonnen (WEC 31)

Notable Loss: Chael Sonnen (WEC 36)

Brazilian Top Team fighter Paulo Filho went from shining star to burnout with alarming speed. A **Judo** and **Carlson Gracie Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt, Filho was a smothering, dominant grappler in an undefeated run through **Pride** that saw him emerge as one of the top middleweights in the world. Had he not suffered a knee injury in a submission win over eventual tournament champion **Kazuo Misaki**, there's every reason to believe Filho would have claimed Pride's 2006 welterweight (183 pounds) Grand Prix title.

After the demise of Pride, and a nine-month layoff, Filho made his American debut in **Zuffa's WEC**, fighting for the vacant middleweight title against Canadian grappler Joe Doerksen. Although Filho exhibited solid takedown defense and knocked the tough Doerksen out in the first round, something didn't seem right: Filho appeared smaller, less aggressive. It was easy to chalk the Doerksen fight up to ring rust, but a pair of bizarre matches against **Team Quest's Chael Sonnen** would fully expose how far Filho had fallen.

In their first bout, a passive Filho looked largely helpless through two rounds before catching a careless Sonnen in a well-executed **arm bar** from **guard**. Sonnen screamed in pain, yelling "Tap!" in an obvious verbal submission. Sonnen immediately denied that he'd submitted, however, and berated referee Josh Rosenthal for stopping the fight.

A rematch was signed, but delayed when Filho entered rehabilitation for a substance abuse problem. After nearly a year, the two met again, but in a non-title contest after Filho failed to make weight, missing by an astounding seven pounds. After a passable first round, Filho fought the rest of the match in a strange state of mind, glancing around the cage in nervous distraction as he ate a steady diet of jabs en route to a unanimous decision loss. Although it was Filho's first loss in a career filled with solid wins over serious competition, it looked an awful lot like the end of the line.

Fitch, Jon

Height: 6'

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 2/24/78

Debut: RFC 1 (7/13/02)

Career Record: 23-3 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Shonie Carter (Shooto USA); Thiago Alves (*Ultimate Fight Night 5*); Diego Sanchez (UFC 76); Thiago Alves (UFC 117)

Notable Losses: Wilson Gouveia (HOOKnSHOOT: Absolute Fighting Championship 1); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 87)

In another sport, Jon Fitch might be called a “grinder.” He’s never going to be the prettiest, the most athletic, or the smoothest. But he might be the hardest working, the toughest, and the best prepared.

Fitch will never be mistaken for a dynamic action fighter. A former Purdue wrestler, Fitch is the epitome of the “Big 10 style.” He grinds his opponents into the fence, takes them down, makes them work. It was an effective style, leading to eight consecutive wins in the Octagon, but it was also a style that fans and the **UFC** brass considered a little dull.

While Fitch was making an undeniable case for a title shot with win after win, he was doing it primarily outside of the public spotlight. His fights were often on the untelevised undercard and he just didn’t seem television-friendly. Fitch was scheduled for the first season of ***The Ultimate Fighter***, but was pulled from the show as he was on his way to the airport for the flight to Las Vegas. Spike television officials didn’t think he had what it took to entertain.

In Their Own Words: Jon Fitch on confidence despite anonymity

“I think it’s a key factor in any career. For someone to be successful, if you don’t have the confidence in yourself to achieve the things that lay in front of you, then you’re always going to be a failure. I think I struggled early in my **wrestling** career at Purdue because I lacked confidence. But ever since I’ve started fighting, I’ve put myself on the same playing field mentally as all my opponents, and my confidence is through the roof. I’m just as much of an athlete or just as much of a man as anybody else I’m facing.

“Because of the way I came up through the UFC, a lot of people didn’t see a lot of my fights. People develop an attachment to fighters that they see fight live. When they see you in a pay-per-view or they see you in a live event and they watch you fight, they develop a real attachment to you. So yeah, I think a lot of fans still don’t know who I am, really. They haven’t developed that kind of attachment or an appreciation for me. But it’s not really their fault, I guess; it’s just the way things go. We had a stacked weight division, and I just kind of slipped through the cracks.”

Through it all, Fitch has remained remarkably patient. He called out the UFC once, before UFC 68, when his fight with Luigi Fioravanti was scheduled for the untelevised portion of the show. He quickly recanted. For the most part, Fitch's solution was to go back to the gym and work harder. Eventually, his wins could not be denied. Beating top contenders **Thiago Alves** and **Diego Sanchez** earned Fitch his shot at the welterweight title.

Georges St. Pierre was too much for Fitch, but he earned respect from fans for a display of heart and guts. He took a beating from St. Pierre, but he took it like a man. Unfortunately for Fitch, his moment in the sun was short. He challenged the UFC brass over their insistence that he and others sign away lifetime license rights for the new UFC video game and was briefly released from the promotion. He caved in to the UFC's strong-arm tactics the very same day, but was punished for his temerity. For his next fight, with his profile at an all-time high after a main event title shot, Fitch was back on the undercard. It appears Fitch will have to fight his way back towards contendership. He wouldn't have it any other way.

Florian, Kenny

Nickname: Ken Flo

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 5/26/76

Debut: Mass Destruction 10 (1/25/03)

Career Record: 14-4

Notable Wins: Chris Leben (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1); Din Thomas (UFC Fight Night 11); Roger Huerta (UFC 87); Joe Stevenson (UFC 91); Takanori Gomi (UFC Fight Night 21)

Notable Losses: Diego Sanchez (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1 Finale); Sean Sherk (UFC 64); B.J. Penn (UFC 101)

Kenny Florian is the ultimate underdog. He wasn't just an afterthought during the filming of ***The Ultimate Fighter***; he wasn't even supposed to be there. Florian was extremely fortunate to set foot in a house stocked with prime prospects. He was a virtual unknown when **UFC** executives journeyed to Massachusetts to scout Drew Fickett. At the end of the night, Fickett was victorious, but it was Florian who was on his way to Las Vegas for the reality television show. He just had "something" — that intangible feature that made the UFC suspect he would be a game opponent.

Even in the house, he was underestimated time and again. He ended up fighting in the UFC at 155 pounds, but during *The Ultimate Fighter* he was competing at middleweight, clearly the runt of the litter. He was known as a solid ground fighter, but during that first season fans and opponents discovered his secret weapon: his razor sharp elbows. He cut the prohibitive favorite



Chris Leben with elbows and advanced to the finals where he lost convincingly to **Diego Sanchez** in the first round.

Many *TUF* runner-ups eventually disappear into near obscurity. It's almost a curse at this point to be the *TUF* runner-up: **Stephan Bonnar**, Brad Imes, **Luke Cummo**, Josh Haynes, and **Ed Herman** have all struggled since coming up just short. Florian is the lone exception. He's grown remarkably as a fighter since being manhandled by Sanchez, gaining confidence and building his body into a vessel that allows him to compete with the best in the world.

Florian improved so fast that he became the first *Ultimate Fighter* alum-nus to earn a UFC title shot. At UFC 64, he and **Sean Sherk** battled for the vacant UFC lightweight championship, the first lightweight title bout since **B.J. Penn** fought **Caol Uno** to a draw at UFC 41 in 2003. Florian lasted all five rounds with Sherk, even cutting him with one of his patented elbows, but clearly had room to grow.

Since that loss, Florian has been undefeated. He rolled through Japanese sensation Dokojanuse Mishima and worked his way back into contention. Progressively better fighters felt Florian's wrath, including rising stars Joe Lauzon and **Roger Huerta**. Not only was Florian winning fights, he was finishing them, winning four in a row decisively by submission or knockout. When Florian got a second chance at the lightweight title against B.J. Penn,

he was ready and the fans were ready for him as a legitimate challenger. He fell to Penn, but established himself as the real deal. Florian has become a star, not just in the cage, but outside it. As the co-host of ESPN's *MMA Live* he's preparing for a life beyond fighting. It seems whether he wins a title or not, Florian will be around the sport for years to come.

Franca, Hermes

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 8/26/74

Debut: HOOKnSHOOT: Kings 1 (11/17/01)

Career Record: 19-9

Notable Wins: Caol Uno (UFC 44); Spencer Fisher (UFC Fight Night 8); Marcus Aurelio (UFC 90)

Notable Losses: Josh Thomson (UFC 46); Yves Edwards (UFC 47); Sean Sherk (UFC 73); Frank Edgar (UFC Fight Night: Silva vs. Irvin)

With more than ten fights in the **UFC**, an appearance in the 2003 K-1 **Hero's** Grand Prix, and impressive wins and competitive losses against some of the best lightweight fighters in the world, Hermes Franca has had a respectable career by almost any measure. In more than 25 appearances in the ring and the



cage matched up against top competition, he's been stopped only once — a remarkable achievement. It's a shame, then, that Hermes Franca will be best remembered for his part in one of the sport's most embarrassing episodes.

Franca challenged **Sean Sherk** for his lightweight title at the unwittingly appropriately titled UFC 73: Stacked. After a sleeper of a fight, in which Sherk blanketed Franca for the better part of five rounds to take a unanimous decision, both champion and challenger tested positive for banned substances: Sherk for Nandrolone, which he denied, and Franca for Drostanolone, which he admitted. Franca released a statement in which he reminded us that fighting is how he makes a living, and explained that he chose to take **steroids** only after an ankle injury threatened to keep food from his family's table. Franca joined the long list of busted fighters who took steroids only once, to rehab an injury, rather than to gain a competitive edge by being bigger, stronger, and faster than their opponents.

Franklin, Rich

Nickname: Ace

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 185-205 lbs

Born: 10/5/74

Debut: WEF 6 (6/19/99)

Career Record: 28-5 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Marvin Eastman (WFA 1); Evan Tanner (UFC 42, UFC 53); Ken Shamrock (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1 Finale); Yushin Okami (UFC 72); Matt Hamill (UFC 88); Wanderlei Silva (UFC 99); Chuck Liddell (UFC 115)

Notable Losses: Lyoto Machida (Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2003); Anderson Silva (UFC 64, UFC 77); Dan Henderson (UFC 93); Vitor Belfort (UFC 103)

When the **UFC** first began its major expansion in 2005, one of the poster boys for the sport was middleweight Rich Franklin. Franklin was the perfect fighter to trot out in front of critics and media looking to portray the Octagon as the arena of bloodthirsty barbarians. Franklin was as clean-cut as you could imagine: a former school teacher and a devout, well-spoken Christian.

While many people remember the famous **Forrest Griffin/Stephan Bonnar** fight, the actual main event of the UFC's first live fight show on Spike TV was in fact Franklin taking on "The World's Most Dangerous Man" **Ken Shamrock**. Shamrock had long since ceased to be a great fighter and was no longer in prime fighting shape. But to most fans, he was a name synonymous with the early UFC. Franklin's decisive win did exactly what matchmakers expected it to do: it catapulted their hand-picked new star into the stratosphere.

Franklin proved worthy of the promotion's confidence, winning several tough fights and taking the UFC middleweight title from **Evan Tanner** at UFC 53.



In Their Own Words: Rich Franklin on moving to 205 pounds

"I think that for me these are going to be tough matchups just for the simple fact that I'm not a big 205-pound fighter. And so a lot of these guys are taller than me, wider than me, longer than me. I'm going to deal with weight issues and strength issues, probably. So a lot of the matchups are going to be tough, but I'm willing to try to tackle them.

"At this point in time I'm not in the title hunt at 205. Perhaps I will be at some point in time as long as I keep winning fights. But until then, you know, if the UFC has exciting fights for me at 195 pounds and fights that the fans want to see than I'm willing to drop and do what I need to do just to pull in good fights.

"Honestly, it really doesn't matter to me. I think at this point in time, I'm interested in putting on exciting fights for the fans. So if in the process of that whole thing if I continue doing the things that I need to do and winning fights and stuff like that, eventually I'll make my way back to a title run. And, you know, if I can get back to the title run that would be a great Cinderella story for me before I retire."

Despite this success Franklin didn't catch on with the audience the way **Chuck Liddell**, **Randy Couture**, or even **Matt Hughes** did. Perhaps all the traits that made him the perfect corporate spokesman didn't help him win over the harder edged UFC audience that preferred the mohawked party boy Liddell to the creationist Christian. For whatever reason, Franklin's pay-per-view main events were routinely among the least purchased UFCs of any given year.

Inside the cage, after two successful title defenses, Franklin ran head first into a brick wall known as **Anderson Silva**. The spindly "Spider" was a silky smooth striker as well as a dangerous ground fighter. He dismantled Franklin not once, but twice, pummeling him in the **clinch** and stopping him twice with knees to the head. The second loss, in his home state of Ohio, seemed to deflate Franklin's fighting spirit. The two losses had left him in an awkward predicament. He was too big a star and too good a fighter to simply fill a role as the middleweight gatekeeper, but at the same time, no one could imagine a third fight with Silva.

Instead, Franklin moved up to 205 pounds, looking to reinvent himself as a light heavyweight. Just a bit too small for the division, Franklin was in kind of a netherworld. The UFC exacerbated the problem by booking him in two catchweight bouts at 195 pounds, one a win over **Wanderlei Silva**, the other a dramatic knockout loss to **Vitor Belfort**. Stuck between two weight classes, Franklin was wasting precious time he needed to bulk himself up so he could be a legitimate light heavyweight. He took a step forward with a dramatic knockout of the fading legend Liddell at UFC 115, but lagging pay-per-view sales indicated it would take more than that to reestablish Franklin as a top name. Already 35, his window of opportunity in this new division is closing quickly.

Frye, Don

Nickname: The Predator

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 219 lbs

Born: 11/23/65

Debut: UFC 8 (2/15/96)

Career Record: 20-8-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Gary Goodridge (UFC 8); Tank Abbott (Ultimate Ultimate 96); Ken Shamrock (Pride 19); Yoshiro Takayama (Pride 21)

Notable Losses: Mark Coleman (UFC 10, Pride 26); Hidehiko Yoshida (Pride 23)

Don Frye is a walking stereotype, the prototypical American tough guy. He's a gravelly voiced, mustachioed firefighter who's not afraid to stand toe-to-toe with any man on the planet. Frye's sly sense of humor and his refusal to quit under any circumstances have made him a main event star on two continents.

Fans have watched him morph from a handsome Tom Selleck look-alike into a craggy, used-up cowboy. But we understand — we've seen him age years from brutal battles inside the cage.

Like many of the most successful fighters in the early years of the **UFC**, Frye was a wrestler by trade, coached by **Dan Severn** at Arizona State and a teammate of **Randy Couture** at Oklahoma State. When Frye saw Severn at **UFC 4** he knew MMA was the perfect fit for him. He joined Severn's entourage and, after a couple of underground fights, got his shot at **UFC 8** in Puerto Rico. He was never really listed as a wrestler in the **UFC**, preferring to claim **judo** and **boxing** as his arts. There was an unofficial quota on wrestlers in the Octagon, so it was important for Frye not to be stuck in that mold. It didn't matter much. No matter what you called him, he was tremendously effective.

UFC 8 was **SEG** executive Campbell McLaren's brainchild, a last and desperate attempt to keep the **UFC** from becoming boring. The idea was simple: take the **Keith Hackney**/Emmanuel Yarborough fight from **UFC 3** and try to replicate it several times in one night. The tournament was called David and Goliath and was divided between monsters and mere men. It ended just as McLaren imagined, with a David battling a Goliath for the title of Ultimate Fighting Champion. Frye, the David at just over 200 pounds, made short work of the fake **Kuk Soon Wol** black belt **Gary Goodridge** to claim the championship and immediately became a crowd favorite.

After beating jiu-jitsu wizard Amaury Bitetti at **UFC 9**, Frye advanced to the finals of **UFC 10** where he ran into a juggernaut named **Mark Coleman**. Coleman, like Frye, was a wrestler. But while Frye was a good wrestler, Coleman was exceptional, a former **Olympian** who looked unstoppable. Coleman gave Frye a merciless beating, and fans saw Frye's heart displayed for the first time. He refused to quit and after **11** minutes the fight was finally stopped.

Frye took advantage of a second chance to win another **UFC** tournament, beating **Tank Abbott** in the finals of Ultimate Ultimate 96. Abbott, a bar room brawler with an amazing bench press and hands of stone, almost had Frye beaten early, rocking him with a strong punch that sent the smaller man stumbling. Abbott fell over his own feet when he swooped in for the kill and Frye took his back for the win. It was his final **UFC** fight.

The **UFC** was struggling with politicians and cable companies and the money just wasn't there. Like **Ken Shamrock**, Frye had the looks and charisma to escape the sinking ship and join the wacky world of **professional wrestling**. Frye went to New Japan Pro Wrestling where his tough guy reputation and subtle bad guy tactics, like refusing to break a hold when his opponent was

In Their Own Words: Don Frye on painkillers

"Painkillers are real easy to get addicted to, mostly because you only start taking them because you really need them. Then one day you're howling at the moon and telling yourself that you're not the kind of person who does drugs, even if you're spending most of your day high on pharmaceutical-grade opiates.

"Here's the hard truth: life is pain. Most mornings I feel like I got shot out of a cannon. Other mornings it's really bad. You just have to learn to live with it. Try easing off from Vicodin to Advil. Tequila don't hurt, either."

in the ropes, made him a huge star. Frye was selected to face **Antonio Inoki** in the Japanese legend's final professional wrestling match, a rare honor for a foreigner new to the sport.

When Inoki wanted to push his wrestlers into real fights in an ill-fated attempt to remake them in his own image, Frye was a natural choice to return to the ring. Five years after his retirement from the sport, he returned against **Gilbert Yvel** in an ugly, foul-plagued fight at **Pride 16** that saw Yvel stick his fingers into Frye's eyes on multiple occasions.

Pride was at the height of its popularity in Japan and was finally making an effort to conquer the U.S. market as well. The biggest fight they had available for the American fans was Frye against long-time rival Ken Shamrock. The two were among the biggest names in UFC history and had legitimate bad blood.

Frye had become close to Shamrock's adopted father Bob, who had indicated he would support Frye rather than Ken in the fight. It was one of the greatest fights in Pride history. Frye won all the standup collisions and the decision. But his refusal to tap out to Shamrock's vicious **leg locks** left him in near constant pain and eventually led to a crippling addiction to pain pills. It also ended Frye's career as a serious and legitimate contender to the best fighters in the sport.

Frye was still capable of crowd-pleasing slugfests, like his legendary fight with professional wrestler **Yoshihiro Takayama**. But against top stars, like Mark Coleman and **Hidehiko Yoshida**, he was all but helpless. Today, Frye is best known for his comedy stylings, including a popular interview segment on the **IFL** shows called "Dear Don." At 43, he is still active and when you see him fight you know just what to expect: he's going to give all he has until somebody falls down.

Fujita, Kazuyuki

Nickname: Ironhead

Height: 6'

Weight: 240 lbs

Born: 10/16/70

Debut: Pride Grand Prix 2000 Opening Round (1/30/00)

Career Record: 15-9

Notable Wins: Mark Kerr (Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals); Ken Shamrock (Pride 10); Bob Sapp (K-1 MMA Romanex)

Notable Losses: Mark Coleman (Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals); Mirko Cro Cop (K-1 Andy Hug Memorial, Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2002); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride 26); Wanderlei Silva (Pride Critical Countdown Absolute); Jeff Monson (Pride 34); Alistair Overeem (Dynamite!! 2009)

Iron-headed, heavy-handed Japanese Greco-Roman **wrestling** champion Kazuyuki Fujita has held his own against some of the biggest names in all of mixed martial arts, from early greats like **Ken Shamrock**, **Mark Coleman**, and **Mark Kerr** to current stars like **Fedor Emelianenko**, **Mirko Cro Cop**, **Wanderlei Silva**, and **Brock Lesnar**. The Lesnar match was a little different from the others, though, in that it was less an MMA contest, and more a three-way International Wrestling Grand Prix title match with both Lesnar and Masahiro Chono in the main event of a New Japan Pro Wrestling Tokyo Dome show.

Don't let Fujita's parallel career as a professional wrestler (under the guidance of wrestling legend and MMA pioneer **Antonio Inoki**) fool you: his MMA accomplishments are completely legitimate. Fujita came as close as anyone to stopping Fedor Emelianenko when he staggered the undisputed heavyweight king with an enormous, clubbing right hand. For a few brief seconds, a woozy Emelianenko swayed from side to side, flailing his arms overhead as he tried to maintain his balance. Fedor instinctively worked his way into a **clinch**, only to have Fujita plant the Russian on his back as the frenzied Yokohama crowd chanted, "FU-JI-TA! FU-JI-TA!"

But Fedor, being Fedor, managed to escape to his feet. Although still wobbly, Fedor sent Fujita tumbling to the mat seconds later with a liver kick and a right-left combination, took the back, and ended the fight with a **rear naked choke** only 90 seconds after Fujita had put him in the most trouble he'd ever seen. Fujita has never again looked as dangerous as he did against Emelianenko — how could he? — but between that tremendous bout, and his part in the infamous **Petey, My Heart!** episode, there can be no doubt that Kazuyuki Fujita has left his mark.

Full Contact Fighter

Joel Gold's monthly newspaper *Full Contact Fighter* was the semi-official chronicle of the sport in its darkest days. Gold was a boxer who got interested

in the **UFC** and began learning submissions. A neck injury kept him from pursuing a career in the Octagon, but Gold still wanted to be close to the unique world of MMA.

Starting with **UFC 13**, Gold covered every UFC event until the paper was stripped of its credentials in October 2005. Along the way, *Full Contact Fighter* became the bible of MMA. The paper covered events large and small and featured interviews with the biggest names in the sport.

Before the internet MMA scene exploded at the end of the '90s, fans often waited for their monthly issue of *Full Contact Fighter* to see who had won fights around the world. The writers Gold brought in to assist him became a who's who of MMA reporters, including Jim Genia, Eddie Goldman, Josh Gross, and Loretta Hunt.

When sites like **Sherdog** and **The Underground** made MMA information available more quickly, and for free, *Full Contact Fighter* had a hard time competing. The coverage they offered didn't change to reflect the new reality of online news. To succeed, *Full Contact Fighter* needed to focus on their interviews and expert analysis. Instead, they continued to approach their paper as a medium to provide event results, results that were weeks old by the time *Full Contact Fighter* arrived in the mailbox.

Today, the bible of MMA is an afterthought. Many fans don't even know it still exists. But during the dark days of MMA, when the UFC wasn't even available to cable customers on pay-per-view, *Full Contact Fighter* was the absolute best source for MMA news on the planet.

Funaki, Masakatsu

Height: 6'

Weight: 190 lbs

Born: 3/13/69

Debut: Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1 (19/21/93)

Career Record: 39-13-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Bas Rutten (Pancrase: Pancrash! 1); Ken Shamrock (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 4); Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 5); Frank Shamrock (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 2); Guy Mezger (Pancrase: 1995 Anniversary Show, Pancrase: 1997 Anniversary Show); Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: Truth 9, Pancrase: Alive 11); Semmy Schilt (Pancrase: Alive 2, Pancrase: Advance 4); Ikuhisa Minowa (Dream 6)

Notable Losses: Ken Shamrock (Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1); Jason DeLucia (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 2); Frank Shamrock (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 6); Bas Rutten (Pancrase: 1996 Anniversary Show); Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: Alive 4); Guy Mezger (Pancrase: Advance 5); Semmy Schilt (Pancrase: 1998 Anniversary

Show); Rickson Gracie (Colosseum 2000); Kazushi Sakuraba (Dynamite!! 2007); Kiyoshi Tamura (Dream 2)

Masakatsu Funaki was expected to be a **professional wrestling** megastar. He was a protégé of **Antonio Inoki** and had the looks and skill in the ring to become a wrestling legend. In a training class that included future stars Jushin Liger, Chris Benoit, and Shinya Hashimoto, Funaki was the standout. His future was assured, but he was prepared to give it all up to live out a dream: real professional wrestling.

Funaki's **Pancrase** promotion brought professional wrestling full circle. What had started as legitimate matches between tough guys at the turn of the 20th century had become a sideshow spectacle with flamboyant characters and over-the-top antics. Funaki wanted to take wrestling back to an earlier time. Instead of copying the latest American tomfoolery, he was prepared to embrace the ethos of an earlier time. His wrestling matches would use standard rules fans were familiar with, but would also be legitimate contests.

Trained by Yoshiaki Fujiwara and Karl Gotch, Funaki was the best and most technically proficient of the Pancrase fighters. While others, like **Ken Shamrock** and **Bas Rutten**, focused their energies primarily on becoming better fighters, Funaki had bigger challenges. Because he was the promoter as well as the star, his personal training was often compromised, as he spent much of his time teaching his own competitors. Funaki was the chief trainer in Japan for both Shamrock and Rutten, two fighters who both beat him in the ring.

Funaki was often involved in Pancrase's most controversial fights. As the promoter, it was frequently more important for him to keep an eye towards developing new stars than it was to worry about his own win-loss record. Sometimes that meant losing to fighters he should have (and could have) beaten like Jason DeLucia, Yuki Kondo, and Rutten. Funaki was already an established star thanks to his wrestling pedigree, good looks, and personal charisma; he could afford to lose and remain strong with his fan base. His pro wrestling mentality gave him no compunctions about throwing fights. The goal each time was simple-building more star fighters for Pancrase.

As the promotion felt the pressure from the larger and better funded **Pride** group, Funaki was finally ready to take the lead role instead of propping up others on his broad shoulders. He beat his protégé, Yuki Kondo, for the King of Pancrase title in December 1997, but it was too little, too late. His best fighting days were behind him and he was unable to hold off **Guy Mezger** in his first defense. In Pancrase, Funaki and the other main stars fought once a month, every month, for years. It was a crazy schedule, guaranteed to break

down bodies and shorten careers. By the time he had his retirement match with **Rickson Gracie** at Colosseum 2000, Funaki was a shadow of his former self. He was dispatched quickly, yet another pro wrestler victimized by the most brutal Gracie.

Funaki stayed in the spotlight in retirement, taking several starring movie roles including playing **Masahiko Kimura** in a movie about wrestling legend Rikidozan. He shocked the world in December 2007 by making a brief return to MMA for K-1. The extra rest and relaxation may have helped his body heal, but it didn't make him a better fighter. Funaki fought fellow legends **Kazushi Sakuraba** and **Kiyoshi Tamura**, but was beaten badly in both matches, barely putting up a fight.

The crowds lost interest quickly, as Funaki didn't carry himself like a fighting legend. He was always a stoic fighter, but in his return he seemed disinterested, lacking any of the fighting spirit so important to Japanese fans. In the final fight of his short-lived comeback, Funaki made amends. Against former Pancrase undercarder **Ikuhisa Minowa**, Funaki had one last magical moment. Sporting gray hair and an unbelievably cut body for a 40-year-old man, Funaki was able to turn back the clock to upset his former student. Minowa wore wrestling boots, a mistake against a **leg lock** specialist like Funaki. The legend made him pay, securing a **heel hook** in less than a minute. Funaki broke into tears as the crowd went wild one last time.

He shocked Japan again with a surprise announcement. The man who revolutionized professional wrestling and helped pave the way for legitimate fighting in Japan was making a return to the business he had rejected years ago. Funaki was returning to traditional professional wrestling.



Garcia, Marcelo

Nickname: Marcelinho

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 181 lbs

Born: 1983

Debut: Hero's 2007 in Korea (10/28/07)

Career Record: 0-1

Notable Loss: Dae Won Kim (Hero's 2007 in Korea)

Although he's far from a household name, any fan who watched Travis Lutter's non-title bout with **UFC** middleweight champ **Anderson Silva** has at least heard of Marcelo Garcia. When play-by-play man **Mike Goldberg**, in his enthusiasm, repeated a comment by matchmaker **Joe Silva** suggesting that Travis Lutter was in possession of not merely average black-belt level **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** skills, but in fact "Michael Jordanesque" abilities relative to his peers, **Joe Rogan** was having none of it. "No," Rogan said flatly, "No, he's not. He's not that good. Marcelo Garcia is more like Michael Jordan."

Rogan was right. While Lutter is an accomplished black belt, Marcelo Garcia is a four-time Brazilian Jiu-jitsu world champion and three-time **ADCC** champion, widely recognized as the most technically adept submission artist of his era in both **gi** and no-gi grappling. Like Jordan, Garcia is simply on his own level. So, understandably, when Garcia signed with K-1 to make his MMA debut at their 2007 **Hero's** in Korea event, expectations were high.

Garcia's opponent was the journeyman Dae Won Kim, a Korean **judo** player whose most notable fight was a **Pride** Bushido contest against **Akihiro Gono** in which an aggressive Kim managed a few impressive throws before being caught in an **arm bar** late in the ten-minute first round. Few gave Kim much of a chance against the great Garcia — and no chance at all, naturally, if Garcia was able to take the fight to the ground. Which he was, almost immediately: Garcia worked doggedly to secure a single-leg takedown, and then passed from **guard** to **half-guard** to **mount** in a beautiful display of the ground skills that made his reputation. When Garcia took Kim's back with

just over three minutes remaining in the round, a **rear naked choke** finish seemed inevitable.

But it never came. Kim survived Garcia's attacks from back mount, ultimately reversing into Garcia's guard as the round expired. Clearly wanting no part of Garcia on the ground in round two, Kim came out firing, landing a right hand that had Garcia backpedaling. As a visibly shaken Garcia desperately attempted a takedown, Kim caught him with a hard knee that opened a fight-ending cut.

Kim came away with the biggest win of his career. Garcia was left with a hugely disappointing loss, and no burning desire to try his luck at the sport again any time soon. And we were all reminded that in modern mixed martial arts, even Michael Jordanesque ability in a single discipline is not nearly enough to guarantee success.

Gator roll: see **Arm triangle**

Gholar, Darrel

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 210 lbs

Born: 7/16/64

Debut: IVC 5 (4/26/98)

Career Record: 5-6

Notable Win: Amar Suloev (M-1 MFC: European Championship 2000)

Notable Loss: Evan Tanner (UFC 18)

Gholar, a former Pan American Championship silver medalist in Greco-Roman **wrestling**, was an unexceptional fighter. He had once placed fourth at the World Cup, but couldn't find a way to translate his talents into MMA success. With the number of highly successful wrestlers among the short list of MMA legends, it's important to remember that wrestling pedigree isn't an automatic ticket to fighting immortality. For every **Randy Couture**, there is a Royce Alger. For every **Kevin Randleman**, there is a, well, Darrel Gholar.

Where Gholar excelled was as a coach. He journeyed to Brazil to train **Vitor Belfort** and didn't come back home for almost three years. Gholar was the official wrestling trainer for the **Brazilian Top Team**, one of the most successful MMA teams of all time. His work was evident immediately. Jiu-jitsu fighters who normally fought off their backs were now completing takedowns against seasoned wrestlers. Among the stars Gholar trained include **Murilo Bustamante**, **Ricardo Arona**, **Mario Sperry**, and the **Noqueira** brothers.

Gholar is also a bit of a Renaissance man. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in world literature. He has written

screenplays, stage plays, and was named one of the world's 200 best living poets in 2003.

Gi

The traditional martial arts keikogi (literally “practice dress”) has all but disappeared from contemporary MMA competition. Although the **UFC** was built on the strength of a skinny Brazilian in a gi taking on all comers, the gi is not permitted under the **Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts** that have been followed in North America since 2000. It survives in Japanese MMA, but it's only worn by a handful of fighters, and only under specific circumstances where the gi might prove strategically useful. If a **judo** fighter — **Hidehiko Yoshida**, for example, or **Yoshihiro Akiyama** — wants to increase traction in the **clinch**, work a few gi-specific chokes on the ground, or simply provide a bigger billboard for his sponsors, he might well compete in his gi. But that's about it.

Throughout this decline, the gi has maintained its importance as a training tool — depending on whom you ask, at least. There are those, like the innovator **Eddie Bravo**, who believe that the best way to develop MMA-specific grappling skill is to discard the gi from the outset. But many top competitors



— **B.J. Penn** and **Georges St. Pierre** among them — still elect to train in the gi, choosing the deliberate pace of gi grappling to supplement and complement the more explosive, dynamic movements of no gi. It's an ongoing debate within the **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** world: traditionalists argue that no-gi grappling should be built upon a solid gi grappling base, iconoclasts contend that the gi is a vestige.

You can question the direct relevance of the gi to modern mixed martial arts, but there's no denying the importance of the gi to any number of modern mixed martial artists. There's no small number of fighters who continue to proudly wear their keikogi as they make their way to the ring or the cage, choosing to represent their traditional roots as martial artists — as jiu-jitsuka, judoka, samboists, and karateka — even while competing in a very untraditional sport.

Gibson, Lance

Nickname: Fearless

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 11/20/70

Debut: SuperBrawl 4 (4/9/97)

Career Record: 4-5

Notable Wins: Akihiro Gono (SuperBrawl 13); Masanori Suda (Shooto: R.E.A.D. 6)

Notable Losses: Dan Severn (SuperBrawl 5); Evan Tanner (UFC 29); Masanori Suda (Shooto: Treasure Hunt 1)

Lance Gibson is a Canadian fighter best remembered for insisting that the **UFC** announcers refer to him as Lance Gibson Senior during a pay-per-view broadcast. Gibson made an early splash on the international scene, beating top Japanese fighters **Akihiro Gono** and Masanori Suda for **Shooto**. Then he ran into a freight train named **Evan Tanner** at UFC 29 and was absolutely brutalized by the future UFC middleweight champion. Following a loss to Masanori Suda in a rematch, Gibson retired from the sport. He teaches fighters at Gibson's MMA in Port Moody, British Columbia.

Gogoplata

A chokehold, usually executed from **guard**, in which the attacker winds his leg around the opponent's arm and forces the lower shin and instep against the opponent's throat. **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** innovator **Eddie Bravo**, whose rubber guard system has facilitated and popularized the technique, credits Antonio "Nino" Schembri with discovering the gogoplata; however, the move is recorded much earlier in the **judo** texts of Mikonosuke Kawaishi (*My Method of Judo*, 1955), Kyuzo Mifune (*The Canon of Judo*, 1960), and E.J. Harrison (*Judo on the Ground: The Oda Method*, 1954). Although the gogoplata

lurked in the darker corners of the judo ne waza syllabus for decades as kakato (or kagato) jime (literally “heel strangle”), the technique rose to prominence in the context of mixed martial arts through the efforts of a single judoka turned Brazilian Jiu-jitsu player, **Shinya Aoki**. Ryusuke “Jack” Uemura probably holds the distinction of being the first to win a match via gogoplata in mixed martial arts (vs. Isao Terada, ZST: Grand Prix 2 — Finals, January 23, 2005). But it was Aoki who first managed the feat at the highest level of the sport (vs. **Joachim Hansen**, **Pride**: Shockwave 2006, December 31, 2006). Other successful applications of the gogoplata in mixed martial arts include **Nick Diaz**’s overturned submission win over **Takanori Gomi** (**Pride**: Second Coming, February 24, 2007), Aoki’s mounted gogoplata over Katsuhiko Nagata (**Dream** 4, June 15, 2008), and heavyweight Brad Imes’ improbable two wins by the same technique in two months (vs. Zak Jensen, WFC: Downtown Throwdown, September 14, 2007; vs. Bo Cantrell, King of the Cage: Arch Rivals, October 27, 2007).

Goldberg, Mike

Professional wrestling has Jim Ross. Basketball has Dick Vitale and Marv Albert. Football had John Madden. MMA’s iconic announcer is the **UFC**’s Mike Goldberg.

Goldberg took over for the competent Bruce Beck at Ultimate Japan in 1997 and has called almost every UFC fight since. His first partner was Olympic gold medalist **Jeff Blatnick** who did his best to teach him the sport. Goldberg was an unemployed hockey announcer who knew nothing about the world of MMA. In the beginning, when the fights hit the ground Goldberg was lost at sea. Relying on Blatnick to call the action there, he made a strong effort to figure out the sport by getting down on the mats himself. He turned out to be a quick learner. Goldberg was so good that he was one of only a handful of employees who remained with the company long-term when **SEG** sold the UFC to **Zuffa**.

Working primarily with comedian **Joe Rogan**, Goldberg has the difficult task of calling the action while finding a time to plug the UFC’s various sponsors. Some hard-core fans dislike their often bombastic commentary and Goldberg’s catch phrase of “It’s all over.” For casual fans, the two do an amazing job of making every fight seem important and special.

It appeared for a time in 2005 that Goldberg would leave the UFC for **professional wrestling**. Vince McMahon was on his yearly quest to replace lead announcer Ross on **WWE RAW**. The UFC had caught fire among mainstream media outlets, making Goldberg a hot commodity. The **WWE** offered him a

reported \$1.5 million over three years. Ultimately, Goldberg chose to stay and was well rewarded by the **Fertittas** and **Dana White**. It's almost impossible to imagine a UFC broadcast without Goldberg and Rogan. They've become as iconic as the Octagon itself: two future Hall of Famers who help make the sport such an enjoyable television spectacle.

Gomi, Takanori

Nickname: Fireball Kid

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 160 lbs

Born: 9/22/78

Debut: Shooto: Las Grandes Viajes 6 (11/27/99)

Career Record: 31-6 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Rumina Sato (Shooto: To the Top Final Act); Tatsuya Kawajiri (Pride Bushido 9); Hayato Sakurai (Pride Shockwave 2005)

Notable Losses: B.J. Penn (ROTR 4); Marcus Aurelio (Pride Bushido 10); Nick Diaz (Pride 33); Kenny Florian (UFC Fight Night 21)

Pride's Bushido series was essentially **Shooto** for the masses. It took the top ranks of Japan's premier organization for lightweight fighters, and presented them to a broader audience than the venerable International Shooting Commission was ever able to reach. And Bushido's ace, the man Pride built the series around, was Takanori Gomi.

A strong, heavy-handed wrestler who was big for his weight class, Gomi was not the archetypal Japanese lightweight fighter. But he was among the most popular, and, during a remarkable two-year, ten-fight undefeated run in Bushido, he was also the best.

Gomi began his pro career undefeated through his 14 Shooto bouts, earning the Shooto world welterweight championship (154 pounds) from submission expert **Rumina Sato** along the way. After a razor-thin decision loss to **Joachim Hansen** cost him the title, and a one-sided **rear naked choke** loss to the great **B.J. Penn** followed in Hawaii, Gomi returned to Japan and began the streak that made him a star. It began unremarkably enough, with a win over **Chute Boxe** lesser light Jadson Costa, but culminated with title tournament wins over **Tatsuya Kawajiri**, Luiz Azeredo, and **Hayato Sakurai**, making Gomi Pride's first Japanese champion.

The biggest hole in Gomi's game, an inability to work from his back, cost him dearly in his first fight as champion, a non-title embarrassment against Marcus Aurelio. Aurelio, who has done little of note since, persistently and methodically worked towards an **arm triangle** that everyone seemed to see coming except for Gomi, who refused to tap and was choked into unconsciousness. A narrow, split-decision win over Aurelio later in 2006 did little to convince any-

one that Gomi was back on track, nor did his debut on American soil, a **gogo-plata** loss to **Nick Diaz** in which an out-of-shape Gomi looked exhausted only minutes in. (The fight was later ruled a no contest when Diaz tested positive for marijuana.) Since the demise of Pride, Gomi has been given every opportunity to get back on track, first in **Sengoku** and subsequently in the **UFC**, but the fighting form that took him to the top of the ever competitive lightweight division has proved elusive.

Gono, Akihiro

Nickname: The Japanese Sensation

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 10/7/74

Debut: Lumax Cup Tournament of J '94 (4/23/94)

Career Record: 32-15-7

Notable Wins: Hector Lombard (Pride Bushido 11); Gegard Mousasi (Pride Bushido 12); Yuki Kondo (Pride Shockwave 2006); Hayato Sakurai (Dynamite!! 2009)

Notable Losses: Matt Hughes (Shooto: 10th Anniversary Event); Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: Proof 7); Mauricio Rua (Pride Bushido 2); Dan Henderson (Pride Bushido 9); Jon Fitch (UFC 94)

An Afro wig, a leisure suit, dancing cornermen, and the occasional sequined gown: these are the trademarks of Akihiro Gono. Or, more specifically, the trademarks of his ring entrance alter ego "DJ Gozma," a parody of Japanese pop star DJ Ozma. Gono's elaborate entrances made him a hit with fans, but his opponents are more likely to have been impressed with his tenacity, his unorthodox strikes thrown from strange, unpredictable angles, and his solid submission game. Or maybe his zebra-print trunks.

Like **Grabaka** teammate **Sanae Kikuta**, Gono made his debut in the proto-MMA Lumax Cup. Gono then spent the better part of a decade fighting his way through the **Shooto** and **Pancrase** ranks before becoming a fixture in **Pride's** Bushido series, where he took on such top competition as **Mauricio Rua**, **Dan Henderson**, and **Gegard Mousasi**. Gono handed the dangerous Mousasi what was only his second career loss with a slick **arm bar** in the dying seconds of their 2006 bout in a display of submission skills Gono would repeat in his **UFC** debut against Tamdan McCrory. Despite earning a Submission of the Night bonus for that finish, Gono was bounced from the UFC two fights later after dropping consecutive decisions to Dan Hardy and top-ranked welterweight contender **Jon Fitch**. After his mediocre UFC stint, Gono joined teammates Kikuta and **Kazuo Misaki** in the **Sengoku** organization, Japan's unofficial home for fighters over 30.

Gonzaga, Gabriel

Nickname: Napao

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 256 lbs

Born: 10/18/79

Debut: Brazilian Gladiators 2 (4/2/03)

Career Record: 11-5

Notable Win: Mirko Cro Cop (UFC 70)

Notable Losses: Fabricio Werdum (Jungle Fight 1, UFC 80); Randy Couture (UFC 74); Shane Carwin (UFC 96)

It looked like Gabriel Gonzaga was going to be just another heavyweight. Despite his distinguished **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** competition record, the best Gonzaga had to show for himself after eight professional MMA fights was a win over the undistinguished Carmelo Marrero. So when he entered the cage against **Mirko Cro Cop** soon after the Croatian's **Pride** Open Weight Grand Prix championship, the five-to-one odds against Gonzaga seemed almost generous.

That Gonzaga versus Cro Cop ended with one of the most spectacular head kick knockouts the sport had ever seen was not surprising in and of itself. But that it was Gonzaga who threw the kick, and Cro Cop who was left lying in a twisted heap on the mat . . . now *that* took more than a few people by surprise. Gonzaga thoroughly dominated the few short minutes the fight lasted, taking Cro Cop down and cutting him with powerful elbows. After a curious standup late in the round, a visibly stunned Cro Cop dropped his hands as Gonzaga landed the single blow that would define his career.

That extraordinary victory earned Gonzaga a heavyweight title fight against **Randy Couture**. Although Gonzaga managed to break Couture's arm with a blocked head kick, it was far from enough, as MMA's ageless wonder grounded Gonzaga and pounded him out in the third. Stopped by **Fabricio Werdum** (for the second time) in his next fight, Gonzaga was clearly on his way back down the **UFC's** heavyweight rankings. Dramatic first-round KO losses to rising stars **Shane Carwin** and **Junior dos Santos** furthered that slide, perhaps irrevocably.

Goodridge, Gary

Nickname: Big Daddy

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 250 lbs

Born: 1/17/66

Debut: UFC 8 (2/16/96)

Career Record: 23-22-1

Notable Wins: Oleg Taktarov (Pride 1); Don Frye (Pride Shockwave 2003)

Notable Losses: Don Frye (UFC 8, Ultimate Ultimate 96); Mark Coleman (UFC 10);

Marco Ruas (Pride 2); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 4, Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals);

Naoya Ogawa (Pride 6); Ricco Rodriguez (Pride 9); Gilbert Yvel (Pride 10); Antonio

Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride 15); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride Total Elimination 2003)



Gary Goodridge is an opponent. Over the course of a long career that started all the way back at **UFC 8**, he's been in the ring and the cage with an absolute who's who of heavyweight greats spanning the eras. From **Don Frye** and **Mark Coleman** in the mid-'90s **UFC** to **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** and **Fedor Emelianenko** in the glory days of **Pride**, Goodridge has faced them all — and gone down in the first, more often than not. He has played much the same role in the world of kickboxing, although there he tends to stay upright a little longer. Goodridge might not be equipped to seriously challenge any top-tier heavyweight, but he's tough enough to have earned steady, high-profile work for more than a decade. The respected veteran has given us some memorable moments, beginning with the barrage of elbows he delivered from the crucifix position against the undersized and overmatched Paul Herrera in his **UFC** debut. Then there are the head kicks: the one that Goodridge threw at **Pride's** 2003 New Year's Eve show that put Don Frye out of commission, and the one Gilbert Yvel landed on Goodridge seconds into their **Pride 10** contest in one of the most spectacular knockouts the sport has ever seen. He's never been afraid to trade, and he's never been afraid of taking fights on short notice, either: in 2008, after **Aleksander Emelianenko** failed to get medical clearance to

face **Paul Buentello**, Goodridge stepped in on only 22 hours notice. He lost, of course. But he went the distance.

Grabaka

Sanae Kikuta — **ADCC** submission **wrestling** champion, national high school **judo** champion, and former King of **Pancrase** — founded the Grabaka (literally “grappling fool”) gym and fight team in central Tokyo in June 2000. The initial team roster consisted of Hiroo Matsunaga, Eiji Ishikawa, and the charismatic **Genki Sudo**. Sudo would leave not long thereafter, but Kikuta would be joined by **Akihiro Gono** and **Kazuo Misaki**. Grabaka fighters were under exclusive contract with Pancrase before that relationship ended in 2005, and a Grabaka versus Pancrase-ism rivalry flourished, but the team’s biggest win came with Misaki’s 2006 **Pride** welterweight (183 pounds) Grand Prix title. The gym has also served as a training ground for the kind of gimmick celebrity fighters, like Bobby Ologun and Koji Imada, who flourished in Japan’s MMA boom. In the horrific world of MMA fashion, Grabaka stands alone with its boldly skull- and dragon-free “Vote for Grabaka” and “Grappling Party” T-shirt designs.

Gracie, Carlos

It all started in 1917. **Mitsuya Maeda**, a Japanese judoka turned pro wrestler, was performing in Brazil when a 14-year-old Carlos Gracie saw him at the Teatro Paz in Belem, Brazil, a theater normally reserved for classical musicians and the opera. Gracie was mesmerized by what he saw, a demonstration of the techniques and power of Jigoro Kano’s **judo**. Soon, through his father’s connections in the business and political sphere, Gracie was taking lessons in the sport — lessons that would eventually change combat sports forever.

No other instructor on the planet would have been better suited to help Gracie develop what would eventually become **Gracie Jiu-jitsu**. For the most part, martial artists competed against others in their own discipline. Maeda had fought everyone, across disciplines, for years. While other judo instructors taught with words, Maeda liked to prove the sport’s effectiveness in a fight. He had competed with **karate** men, wrestlers, savate fighters literally all over the world. This gave Maeda’s students a firm grounding in the practical application of judo as a combat art.

After four years studying under Maeda, Gracie moved with his family to Rio de Janeiro, where he later opened the first **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** academy. When his father became ill, Carlos took in his younger brother **Helio**, a sickly

child who watched his older brothers train but was unable to participate. Eventually Helio began teaching classes and, because of his physical weakness and frailty, made some changes that helped create the jiu-jitsu we know today.

As Helio surpassed Carlos as a fighter and trainer, Gracie moved towards managing the academy and focused on his true love: the Gracie Diet. Carlos, who suffered from crippling migraines, was fascinated by what he saw as an unimpeachable connection between his diet and his physical well-being. Soon Carlos was a neighborhood guru, helping people with their health problems and encouraging a diet that focused on keeping “the blood neutral.”

Gracie, Carlson

When **Helio Gracie** retired from fighting in 1955, the Gracies were in danger of losing their status as Brazil’s first family of fighting. Helio was over 40 and had just lost decisively to former student Waldemar Santana. The family had lost prestige and was losing business as well. The draw to studying with the family had always been their impeccable reputations as the toughest men in Rio. Santana had become the top dog by defeating Helio and was leaching students away from his former instructor.

Helio was the youngest of the five Gracie brothers. None of his siblings could possibly avenge the family against Santana. Instead, a young man from the next generation was forced to take a large step forward and represent his family name. Carlson was Carlos Gracie’s eldest son, all of 19 years old when he faced off with his former friend Santana in August of 1956. It was one of the best fights of all time: a back-and-forth affair that went more than 30 minutes before the two men toppled out of the ring and only Gracie returned.

Gracie became the king of Brazilian **Vale Tudo**, fighting 19 times, including five more fights with Santana, with Carlson winning three more and going to a draw twice. His only loss was in 1968, when at the age of 36 he lost to **Luta Livre** fighter Euclides Pereira, a controversial fight that Gracie claimed involved a crooked referee.

His fighting career was integral in maintaining the Gracie name, but it was his work in developing and spreading **Gracie Jiu-jitsu** that was the most important part of his legacy. Carlson eventually split with his uncle Helio and opened his own school across town in Copacabana.

With him went Rolls Gracie, the family’s top fighter of the 1970s. This move helped keep jiu-jitsu vibrant. Instead of comfortably training with no real competitors, the family created its own internal rivalries. It wasn’t enough anymore to be better than the other fighters in Brazil; now the Gracies had to be better than each other, pushing each other to new heights. Carlson also

opened up jiu-jitsu to the masses. While Helio taught all students the most basic techniques, the more advanced jiu-jitsu was reserved for select students and family. Carlson taught everyone, opening up the closed world of Gracie Jiu-jitsu to all of Brazil.

In the battle of the Gracies, Carlson usually came out on top. He taught a very aggressive style of jiu-jitsu, befitting his voluble personality and quick temper, and his students included some of the very best jiu-jitsu and Vale Tudo fighters of the 1970s forward, including Sérgio Iris, Ricardo de la Riva, **Murilo Bustamante**, **Mario Sperry**, and Wallid Ismail. While Helio believed that size and strength mattered less than technique and skill, Carlson disagreed. A truly great fighter needed the entire package. His students were top performers in the sport of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, but also prepared for Vale Tudo competition. In 1991, before the MMA boom had begun, Gracie led a team of jiu-jitsu players against a team of Luta Livre fighters, with jiu-jitsu winning all three contests.

When his cousin **Rorion Gracie** brought Vale Tudo to America with the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, the rivalry began anew. Carlson created his own fight team, **Brazilian Top Team**, dominating fighting competitions the world over. **Vitor Belfort** was a standout in the UFC, while **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** and Mario Sperry starred in Japan. In 2000, Carlson was shocked when most of his top students left the gym to go out on their own. Although many of them had gotten their first opportunities because they trained under the legendary Gracie, once they established their own reputations and the money started coming in, they felt Gracie was taking too big a share.

Gracie was shattered by the desertion. The anger burned in him until his dying day. Even at the age of 70, Carlson wasn't too old to try to start a fight with his former student Belfort after his fight with **Tito Ortiz** at UFC 51. Training fighters — fighters who eventually turned on him — cost Gracie everything. He lost his thriving gym in West Hollywood while focusing on Belfort and his other fighters. When he had no more team to train, the Brazilian, who loved the heat, moved to the blustery and cold Midwest to start over. While he trained new students in Chicago, including future stars **Miguel Torres** and **Stephan Bonnar**, he always felt the sting of betrayal. Carlson Gracie passed away in 2006 at the age of 72.

Gracie, Helio

Helio Gracie is one of the most influential men in the history of MMA. Without him, the **UFC** and MMA as we know it would not exist. His creation, **Gracie Jiu-jitsu**, became one of the most important new martial arts in a century. He introduced the art to Brazil; his sons took it worldwide. Even today it is im-

possible to compete at the highest level of MMA without learning jiu-jitsu, or at least learning how to defend against it.

It's true that Gracie Jiu-jitsu was not created in a vacuum. **Carlos Gracie** unquestionably introduced many of the techniques of Gracie Jiu-jitsu to his brothers and to the nation of Brazil. But Carlos was simply passing on the **judo** instruction he had received from **Mitsuyo Maeda**. It was his younger brother Helio who developed the art into one of the most effective fighting systems in the world. Carlos was essentially teaching judo. He was strong and quick; his brother Jorge was an even better natural athlete and they could perform the moves Jigoro Kano had perfected in Japan.

Helio was different. He was sickly and weak. There were many techniques he simply could not execute, making refining the art necessary. Like many geniuses, he adapted what he found and made it better. The art Gracie created was focused more on ground fighting and less on explosive throws.

Gracie was committed to making sure his brand of jiu-jitsu worked, not just in cooperative demonstrations, but in real confrontations. He tested himself on the streets (once he even had to be pardoned by Brazil's president after he seriously injured a man in a street fight) and in the ring. His opponents included local martial artists, but also American pro wrestlers working in Brazil. Gracie acquitted himself well, either winning with ease or holding much larger men to a stalemate.

His most famous battles came later in his life, and despite his numerous conquests, his best known fights were both losses. He fought the legendary Japanese judo ace **Masahiko Kimura** in 1951 at the Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Maracanã was brand new, one of the biggest stadiums in the world with a standing room capacity of almost 200,000 people. Gracie didn't fill it, but he did bring in 20,000 people for what was more than a battle of wills. Gracie was striving to prove his art's superiority to judo. Kimura was fighting for his livelihood: his **pro wrestling** shows were struggling in the wake of Gracie choking out his countryman Kato months earlier.

Although the Gracie public relations team has since declared that Kimura was a 220-pound giant, he was actually a well-proportioned 180 pounds for the contest, outweighing Helio by just 25 pounds. The show was quite a spectacle. There was a growing Japanese immigrant population in Brazil and the fight became a jingoistic battle of nations. Even Brazil's future president Café Fihlo was in attendance. Before the fight, Kimura was amused to see a coffin at ringside. He was told Helio had brought it for him.

Instead of finishing Kimura, it was Helio who was beaten soundly. Kimura was considered quite possibly the best judoka of all time. He threw Gracie like

a rag doll, choking him out (Gracie admitted to being out cold before Kimura released the hold), and finally breaking his arm with a shoulder lock called the ude-garami. Helio refused to tap out, but his brother Carlos threw in the towel. In honor of his conqueror, the hold he beat Gracie with was known as the “**Kimura**” from then on.

Gracie’s second most famous fight was against former student Waldemar Santana. Gracie had retired from professional fighting when Santana began taking pro wrestling bookings to earn much needed cash. Gracie was against pro wrestling and forbid it. Soon a reporter was playing the two men off each other, and the 42-year-old Gracie came out of retirement to teach Santana a lesson. Unlike the Kimura fight, this was a private affair, held at a local YMCA out of the public eye. The fight was a marathon. Both men were bathed in sweat, but after nearly four hours, Gracie was exhausted. He was caught with kick to the head and was knocked out, ending his 23-year career.

Gracie was an interesting man. He gave all of his nine children names beginning with the letter R. He also taught those children jiu-jitsu, and through them, took his life’s work around the globe. His son **Rorion Gracie** was one of the early owners of the UFC and brought Gracie Jiu-jitsu to America, slowly but surely building a national following. His younger sons, **Rickson** and **Royce**, became legends — Royce in America with the UFC, and Rickson in Japan with **Vale Tudo** Japan and later **Pride**.

It was the culmination of everything Gracie had worked for. His ideas and his art form were being taught worldwide and even into his nineties he was thinking about jiu-jitsu daily, still training and teaching students all over the planet.

Gracie Jiu-jitsu: see **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**

Gracie, Ralph

Nickname: The Pit Bull

Height: 5’9”

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 1971

Debut: Desafio: Gracie Vale Tudo (1/1/92) **Career Record:** 6-1

Notable Win: Dokojanuse Mishima (Pride Bushido 1)

Notable Loss: Takanori Gomi (Pride Bushido 3)

There was something about the descendants of the founder of **Gracie Jiu-jitsu**, Carlos Gracie Sr. They were a little on the wild side, and you can tell that is true in particular of Ralph Gracie just by looking at him. He has crazy eyes, wild eyes, and his approach to jiu-jitsu reflects it.

When Ralph made his American MMA debut at **Extreme Fighting 1** in November 1995, fans were used to a different style of Gracie Jiu-jitsu. They had seen **Royce Gracie** in action — by this point 12 times in the **UFC** — and thought they had a feel for what Gracie Jiu-jitsu was all about. Royce, more often than not, was on the bottom. He would bide his time, like in his fight with **Dan Severn**, before finally finishing his opponent. Ralph threw that all out the window. Nicknamed “The Pit Bull,” his style was aggressive and brutal. He didn’t believe in waiting for an opening to finish the fight; he was going to create his own opening by coming forward as hard and fast as he could. Even his uncle, the legendary **Rickson Gracie**, looked passive compared to the infamous pit bull.

In Extreme Fighting this approach worked wonders. Ralph won three fights in the short-lived but innovative promotion, all of them in less than two minutes. His most famous fight of the era was against former national **sambo** champion and United States Shoot Wrestling Federation founder Steve Nelson. Ralph thought Nelson had been cavalier in expressing his desire to fight a member of the Gracie clan. Instead of using a joint lock or a choke, he punished Nelson with strikes for his perceived disrespect.

For Ralph, this kind of vendetta was a way of life. His father Robson encouraged the boys to settle problems with their fists. When they would throw down, Robson wouldn’t admonish them, only tell them how they could have fought more effectively. Ralph once shot at his brother **Renzo Gracie** with a crossbow (“Just to scare him,” he says now with a grin) and the brothers and cousins fought constantly. Even when his adult son, Ralph’s late brother **Ryan Gracie**, attacked Wallid Ismail in a nightclub, his father justified it because Wallid had been bragging about beating three Gracies (Renzo, Ralph, and Royce). To Robson, the claim was a lie, because Royce didn’t really count. “He is just the seller of T-shirts,” he said dismissively. Besides, said Robson, Wallid “had homosexual tendencies.”

With this kind of upbringing, there was little chance of escaping a life of violence. For the most part, Ralph was able to keep it contained to competition. There was an occasional flare-up, like his 2002 dust-up with Bobby Southworth at a grappling tournament. But Ralph was generally able to sate his need to inflict and receive pain by teaching at his jiu-jitsu schools, warrior academies where he created a generation of tough jiu-jitsu players in his mold. His best student was future UFC champion **B.J. Penn**, but the two had a falling out after B.J. challenged Ralph’s brother Renzo Gracie to a fight. Ralph was, by all reckoning, a very good instructor. This was enough, and for five years he sat out of MMA competition.

In Their Own Words: Ralph Gracie on Extreme Fighting 2

"[Steve] Nelson said he had a dream to fight the Gracie family. I made that dream come true. Before the fight he had a lot of big words. After the fight, none. This was the fight when many of the fighters were arrested in Canada. The government was against the fight, but they were not able to go onto the Indian reservation to stop it. We had word that they were coming to the hotel after to arrest everybody. My friend called me and quickly I left my room to go to Nino Schembri's room. We stayed there for three days until the problem was solved. Nino was going crazy in the room and tried to tie all the sheets together so he could climb out of the window. It was very different than the fights today."

In 2003, he made his return and immediately showed he was still among the very best lightweights on the planet. Ralph beat the very tough Dokojanuse Mishima at **Pride Bushido 1** before facing the Bushido ace **Takanori Gomi** at Bushido 3. Gomi had quickly established himself as a world-class competitor. He beat **Rumina Sato** to win the **Shooto** title and, like Gracie, he had beaten Mishima. His combination of punching prowess and charisma earned him the call up from Pride.

It was a tradition for Japanese Pride stars to make their name against the Gracies, and Gomi was no exception. Ralph charged forward, Gomi threw the knee, and Ralph ran right into it. The fight, and Gracie's MMA career, was over in less than ten seconds.

Gracie, Renzo

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 3/11/67

Debut: Desafio: Gracie Vale Tudo (1/1/92)

Career Record: 13-7-1

Notable Wins: Oleg Taktarov (MARS); Maurice Smith (Rings: King of Kings 1999); Pat Miletich (IFL: Gracie vs. Miletich); Frank Shamrock (EliteXC: Destiny)

Notable Losses: Kiyoshi Tamura (Rings: King of Kings 1999); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 10); Dan Henderson (Pride 13); Carlos Newton (Pride Bushido 1); Matt Hughes (UFC 112)

There was a time growing up when Renzo was much like his brother **Ryan Gracie**. He fought on the streets and generally terrorized Rio de Janeiro. Today, Renzo Gracie is by far the most likeable of the fighting Gracies. His brothers **Ralph** and the late Ryan Gracie were quick-tempered and at times just plain



mean. Renzo is different. He's quick to laugh, friendly, and an indefatigable bundle of energy.

Renzo is not as good a grappler as **Royler**. He's not as physically gifted as **Rickson**. He doesn't have **Royce**'s resume. But Renzo was probably the

best all-around fighter in the Gracie family. While the other Gracies believed jiu-jitsu alone was enough to beat the world's best, Renzo followed the example of his mentor and uncle, Rolls Gracie. He wanted to learn it all. Grappling, kickboxing, **wrestling**, and **boxing** — Renzo took them all up with his customary enthusiasm. The end product was the most well-rounded of all the Gracies.

Gracie was part of some of the most memorable finishes in the history of MMA. Against the Russian **Oleg Taktarov**, Renzo finished the fight with a huge up-kick from the **guard**, quickly jumping to his feet to land some extra punches to seal the deal. Taktarov was one of the most feared fighters of his generation. Renzo finished him in just one minute.

When he fought **Luta Livre** artist **Eugenio Tadeu**, the end of the fight was even more explosive. Tadeu had once fought Renzo's cousin Royler Gracie to an hour-long draw and the rivalry between his camp and the Gracies was fierce. Renzo and Tadeu had engaged in a titanic back-and-forth when, after more than 15 minutes, fans rushed the cage. A full-scale riot ensued, the lights went out, shots were fired, and people were fighting all over the building. The fight between Gracie and Tadeu, as epic as it was, paled in comparison. It was declared a no contest.

Renzo was the third Gracie to fight Japanese sensation **Kazushi Sakuraba**. Sakuraba had talked trash to the others in the family, but he respected Renzo too much to do so to him. Sakuraba saw Renzo as a very similar fighter to himself, equally skilled in all facets of the game. The fight was an all-time great. It was an amazing display of striking and grappling, with Renzo winning the striking exchanges and the two going back and forth on the mat, including an amazing cartwheel guard pass by Sakuraba. At the end of the round, Sakuraba secured a **Kimura** lock. Like his cousin Royler, he refused to tap. Unlike with Royler, the referee let the fight continue until Renzo's arm was dislocated at the elbow. From Renzo there were no complaints. "Many people make excuses when they lose," Gracie told the fans. "I have only one. He was better than me tonight."

Renzo's last unbelievable finish was in the final fight of his career. The Gracies and Shamrocks began fighting at **UFC 1**. Fifteen years later, they were still squabbling. **Frank Shamrock**, like Renzo, had become the best fighter in his family. The two seemed evenly matched, but from the start, Renzo imposed his will. Renzo was able to take Shamrock down whenever he wanted and a frustrated Frank delivered several illegal knees to the back of the head.

Renzo suffered a concussion and headed to the hospital with a bruised brain, but also as the victor. It was the final fight of his great career — or so

it seemed. Three years later Gracie made a surprise return and his UFC debut. Gracie had helped the UFC broker a deal with his jiu-jitsu student Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Abu Dhabi-government-owned Flash Entertainment. The group bought a 10 percent stake in **Zuffa** and Renzo walked away with a six-fight UFC contract. The first, and possibly only, fight was against wrestler **Matt Hughes**.

Hughes had beaten Renzo's cousin **Royce Gracie** and engaged in a bitter rivalry with Renzo's top American student, **Matt Serra**. What could have been a grudge match turned into a plodding affair that saw Hughes easily outwork the 43-year-old Gracie. Renzo, true to form, was still smiling at the end, but his legendary career had likely come to a close.

Gracie, Rickson

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 11/20/58

Debut: 4/25/80

Career Record: 11-0

Notable Wins: Zulu (Maracanã Stadium); Yuki Nakai (Vale Tudo Japan 95); Nobuhiko Takada (Pride 1, Pride 4); Masakatsu Funaki (Colosseum 2000)

When he was just 15 years old and a jiu-jitsu purple belt, black belts ran in terror from the aggressive young teenager called Rickson Gracie. He was a monster, more than even a grown man could handle. By his early twenties, Rickson was traveling to every jiu-jitsu school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and submitting all their black belts. To compound the embarrassment, Rickson would tell each man how he was going to tap him out. Then he would go out and execute it. Each sport has a limited number of prodigies — young men so gifted at such an early age that they far outpace their contemporaries, existing on a different level. Rickson Gracie was one such man.

Rickson was the third son of the legendary **Helio Gracie** and inherited the mantle of “family champion” passed on from Helio to his cousin **Carlson Gracie**, and then to his half-brother Rolls Gracie. Rickson was unquestionably the greatest Gracie of the 1980s. He made his **Vale Tudo** debut at the turn of the decade, twice beating the monstrous Zulu in front of large crowds. Rickson also dominated **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** competition. He had the advantage of soaking in knowledge from his brother **Rorion Gracie** and his father during half the week and journeying across town to the Copacabana to train with Carlson on the remaining days. The result was an artist with Helio's keen eye for maximizing leverage and technique and Carlson's emphasis on aggression and physical strength.

Lacking the organized MMA competitions we see today, Rickson sought to prove himself where many young hotheads do: on the streets. There was an intense rivalry between jiu-jitsu, a rich man's game, and **Luta Livre**, the ghetto equivalent. Rickson and his gang would often settle their differences with the Luta Livre crew on the beaches of Brazil and occasionally in the gym or arena. Some of the fights were legendary and iconic. No one who was present could forget Rickson walking up to Hugo Duarte on the beach, slapping him in the face, and eventually mounting him and making him say, "Rickson is the king."

Like his younger brother **Royce Gracie**, Rickson joined Rorion in America to help teach **Gracie Jiu-jitsu** to Hollywood and the world. In 1989, they taught classes out of Rorion's garage, eventually moving on to the world-famous Gracie Academy. When Rorion realized his dream and the **Ultimate Fighting Championship** went from concept to the cage, many assumed Rickson would represent the family. Rorion, to his credit, went with Royce. Rickson was, simply, too good for the UFC. The focus would be on him, a well-muscled superlative athlete who would aggressively dismantle his opponents. The focus would not be on the art of jiu-jitsu. When the frail Royce ran through the competition, it exhibited how well even a limited athlete could defend himself with the right tools.

Still, the slight didn't sit well with Rickson. When his father and cousin had been family champion, they had represented the clan in the ring against all comers. Rickson too wanted to show the world what he could do. With Rorion's stranglehold on America nearly complete, Rickson left the comfort of his brother's shadow and journeyed to Japan to help bring Gracie Jiu-jitsu back to the land where it all began.

Winning Vale Tudo Japan 1994 was the easy part. Rickson sliced through the overwhelmed competition, winning three matches in just over six minutes. The real challenge was the next day, when he held a seminar for many of the top grapplers in the country. One after another, more than 60 of Japan's best challenged him, with Rickson tapping them all out in rapid succession. What happened next changed MMA in Japan forever.

UWFi 1 mid-carder **Yoji Anjo**, looking to maintain the lie that his form of shoot-style **professional wrestling** was real, came to Los Angeles with a large group of Japanese media to challenge Rickson to a fight. They expected Gracie to decline the last-minute impromptu matchup. Instead, feeling slighted by insults flung in front of his family and students, Gracie proceeded to beat the hell out of Anjo in a closed-door dojo challenge.

As the senior man in the promotion, **Nobuhiko Takada** was bound to defend the promotion's — and the whole nation's — honor against the Gracies. The

In Their Own Words: Rickson Gracie on the power of jiu-jitsu

"I see too many mixed martial artists today trying to mix all the styles with cross training. This is very difficult to do. Most people cannot do this perfectly. It is very rare for someone to take up **boxing** and immediately become an expert in this area. It is hard for someone to start **wrestling** and immediately become great.

"The best way for jiu-jitsu athletes to win isn't by confronting an opponent in the other person's strongest art. Yes, you have to understand the other arts so you can solve them. And the solution is jiu-jitsu. Neutralize their game and bring the match to your area of expertise. This is where you have a much better chance to win.

"The main goal of jiu-jitsu is not winning a match. It is to survive, to use leverage and technique to survive when you are put under pressure. It's the defensive concept that makes jiu-jitsu unbeatable. This is why jiu-jitsu is growing all over the world. It is the techniques and the confidence that is the most valuable thing jiu-jitsu offers."

resulting fight between Takada and Rickson took Japanese MMA to a whole new level. The two fought in the Tokyo Dome in front of tens of thousands of fans. When Gracie defeated Takada, the era of shoot-style wrestling was over, and the era of MMA had begun.

Unlike some of his brothers and cousins, Rickson didn't actively pursue the top fighters in the world. He was not shy about the reason he was competing: money. Already 40 years old, Rickson wanted the easiest matchups for the most cash. It was as simple as that. A year to the day after the Takada fight, he won a rematch at **Pride 4**. Almost two years later, he had the final fight of his career against **Pancrase** founder **Masakatsu Funaki**. Occasionally, even though he is over 50, Rickson's name will still come up in a fantasy booked dream scenario. He still believes he could defeat top champions like **Brock Lesnar** and **Fedor Emelianenko** — and a subset of his biggest fans believe it too. Though his career has long been dead and gone, the legend of Rickson Gracie lives on.

Gracie, Roger

Height: 6'4"

Born: 9/26/81

Career Record: 3-0

Weight: 220 lbs

Debut: BodogFight: USA vs. Russia (12/2/06)

Notable Wins: Ron Waterman (BodogFight: USA vs. Russia); Yuki Kondo (Sengoku 2); Kevin Randleman (Strikeforce: Heavy Artillery)

Roger Gracie (née Gomes — a Gracie on his mother’s side) is a unique prospect, a fighter with only two professional bouts who could nevertheless pose considerable problems for even the most seasoned and battle-tested competitors. An eight-time world champion in his family’s art of **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**, Gracie added two prestigious **ADCC** titles to his resume in 2005, taking gold in both the 99 kg and open-weight categories, finishing all seven of his opponents — including such familiar names as Ronaldo Souza, **Fabricio Werdum**, and **Shinya Aoki** — by submission. Gracie is simply the finest heavyweight Brazilian Jiu-jitsu competitor in the world today. And while that isn’t enough to guarantee success in modern MMA competition, that credential coupled with his humility and willingness to learn — British writer Mark Law describes this “charming and most modest of men” taking his place among the beginners as he trained **judo** at the London Budokwai to improve his standing work — is enough to make you wonder. A solid light-heavyweight debut against **Kevin Randleman**, which ended, inevitably, by **rear naked choke**, only served to further the intrigue surrounding the Gracie clan’s young champion.

Gracie, Rorion

When Rorion Gracie came to America in 1978 to attempt to spread his family’s art to the world, he wasn’t even the first Gracie teaching in the United States. His cousin Carley Gracie had been instructing students in their modified version of **judo** since 1972. Carley was teaching without incident, without challenges, without street fights, and without success . . . or at least without the kind of success Rorion envisioned for his family’s greatest creation. Rorion didn’t want to eke out a living or become the most popular grappling instructor in Los Angeles. He wanted success on a global scale.

It’s important to consider what a bold move this was on Rorion’s part. He could easily have stayed in Brazil, like most of his family, and made a living off his father **Helio**’s name. In Rio de Janeiro at least, the Gracie name was well known and there was no shortage of students looking to train with the first family of Brazilian martial arts. But Rorion’s ambition shouldn’t be underestimated. He enjoyed the adventure and the idea of building something on his own, with only his hard work and his smarts as his weapons.

That’s not entirely true. His other weapon, of course, was **Gracie Jiu-jitsu**: a martial arts system that was undeniably effective. To Rorion, it was clearly the best martial art in the world. Gracie Jiu-jitsu, despite what are now ob-

vious merits, took ten years to catch America's attention. That was almost ten years of flipping burgers and working as a gardener for Rorion, but his confidence never seemed to waver. To try and convince people that Gracie Jiu-jitsu — so different from the kind of high-flying, explosive martial arts people had seen in Bruce Lee movies — was actually effective, Rorion took a page out of the earlier generation's playbook.

He instituted his own Gracie Challenge. He and his younger brothers (**Rickson**, **Royler**, and **Royce** eventually joined him in America) would accept challenges from any and all comers. Rorion often filmed the competition, confrontations in dojos that were dominated by the Gracies who invariably befuddled the traditional martial artists on the ground.

Eventually, like many good-looking men in Hollywood, Rorion caught the eye of a television producer (or, more accurately, his future wife) and began to get bit roles in movies and TV shows. Now the students in his classes, taught out of his garage in southern California, were likely to be in the entertainment industry. In 1989, when they had more than 180 students and a large waiting list, Rorion was able to move the classes from the garage to a real training facility, the Gracie Jiu-jitsu Academy in Torrance, California.

1989 was also the year the Gracies were discovered. It wasn't *Black Belt* or *Inside Kung Fu* that came calling on the men wiping the mats with every other martial artist in California; it was *Playboy* magazine in a feature article called "Bad." The article brought Rorion to the attention of **Art Davie**, an energetic advertising executive looking for unconventional pitchmen. Together, the two marketed *Gracie in Action* tapes, showing the Gracie family, well, in action over the years, complete with Rorion's classic broken English descriptions of the action.

To further spread the art of Gracie Jiu-jitsu, Rorion turned to another of his father's oldest tricks. **Vale Tudo**, anything goes fighting, had been big in Brazil during Helio's prime. Rorion thought they could sell in America as well and Davie agreed. They formed a company called wow (War of the Worlds) and the two used all their contacts in the television industry, but came away empty-handed. HBO and Showtime both turned them down flat. They called pay-per-view companies as well, finally hitting paydirt with the struggling **Semaphore Entertainment Group**. The **Ultimate Fighting Championship** was born.

For Gracie, the goal never changed. The UFC, like his other projects, was just a way to bring Gracie Jiu-jitsu to the world. On November 12, 1993, the world of martial arts was forever changed. The UFC didn't just pit athlete versus athlete; it pitted style versus style. Soon it became obvious which martial art was the most successful. Just as Rorion expected, Gracie Jiu-jitsu proved

itself to be the most effective martial art on the planet. And in the blink of an eye, Gracie Jiu-jitsu became a worldwide phenomenon.

The show, despite having no television programming or institutional support, was an immediate hit. The first UFC attracted 86,000 pay-per-view buyers, and by UFC 5 that number had more than tripled. Gracie sold his share of the company at that point. The rules were changing, instituting time limits and other constraints that would make his style less effective. Besides, Rorion had already proven his point and accomplished his goal. The Gracie name is now the most famous name in martial arts, not just in Brazil, but the world over.

Gracie, Royce

Height: 6'

Weight: 175 lbs

Born: 12/12/66

Debut: UFC 1 (11/12/93)

Career Record: 14-2-3

Notable Wins: Ken Shamrock (UFC 1); Kimo Leopoldo (UFC 3); Dan Severn (UFC 4); Akebono (Dynamite!! 2004); Kazushi Sakuraba (Hero's Dynamite!! USA)

Notable Losses: Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals); Matt Hughes (UFC 60)

Royce Gracie is not just the most important fighter in the history of the **UFC**; he is one of the most important martial artists of the 20th century. Gracie changed the way the world thought about the martial arts. Ever since Bruce Lee exploded into America's cultural conscience in the 1970s, people thought of the martial arts as an esoteric collection of spinning and flying kicks, death touches, and the one-inch punch. Gracie changed all of that, showing the world what worked in a real fight and what didn't.

The Gracie family had been refining their ground-focused version of **judo** for almost 70 years when Royce made his MMA debut against boxer Art Jimmerson at UFC 1 on November 12, 1993. Gracie was a brilliant choice to represent the family in this no-holds-barred fighting competition. He was skinny and awkward-looking, 175 pounds dripping wet in a loose-fitting white **gi**, but he beat the boxer in just over two minutes. Even after he defeated Jimmerson, fans were trained to expect an easy **Ken Shamrock** victory in Royce's second round fight. Shamrock was impressively muscled with a body builder's physique, and looked like an action movie star. When Gracie choked him out and then dispatched Gerard Gordeau in the final fight of the evening, it was a victory not just for an athlete but for an art.

Gracie showed that technique can overcome size and strength, making **Gracie Jiu-jitsu** the most intriguing new martial art in the world almost

overnight. The UFC was part of a brilliant plan to market the Gracie's system worldwide, but it only worked because the jiu-jitsu itself really worked. There was some criticism that the event, co-owned by Royce's brother **Rorion Gracie**, was providing easy fodder for the jiu-jitsu fighter. Nothing could be further from the case. They actually brought in Shamrock, a man who knew more about submission fighting than 95 percent of martial artists, and later brought in a big bruising wrestler named **Dan Severn**, to push Royce to his limits. No one could beat him, because his art was too good, too effective at equalizing the odds between a big strong man and a small weak one. It was the way Royce's father **Helio** had designed it to work.

Today, every successful MMA fighter has to know about **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**, either how to use it as an offensive weapon or how to defend against its techniques. Even more than **wrestling** or striking, an inability to defend against submissions spells certain doom for even the most dominant athletes. Without it, you cannot be successful long-term in the sport. Even when Gracie lost in later years, it was to opponents well schooled in his family's techniques — the ultimate victory for the evangelical martial arts family.

All told, Gracie went undefeated in his first UFC tenure, winning three of the first four tournaments. His only recorded "defeat" was a fight with Canadian **Harold Howard** that saw Gracie's corner throw in the towel before the fight began at UFC 3. He beat fighters in a variety of disciplines, including kung fu, **karate**, wrestling, kickboxing, street fighting, and judo. He beat opponents both big and small. When he and his brother Rorion departed the company after fighting Ken Shamrock to a draw at UFC 5, he left behind an incomparable record of accomplishment.

For five years, it seemed like Royce's MMA story had been told in its entirety. But he had an urge to fight, to test himself against the best of the fighters he had inspired. And also, of course, to collect some of the mega paydays Japanese promotions were paying for fighters with the Gracie name. He made his return as part of the greatest tournament the sport of MMA had ever seen. Sixteen men did battle to claim the **Pride Fighting Championship World Grand Prix**. The best of the best were there, including **Igor Vovchanchyn**, **Mark Kerr**, **Mark Coleman**, and **Kazushi Sakuraba**. Royce beat wrestling legend **Nobuhiko Takada** in a lackluster return to the ring, but it set up the match fans were dying to see: Gracie versus the man the media was calling "the Gracie killer."

Because of his brother **Royler**'s controversial loss to Sakuraba, Royce insisted on special rules for the match. There would be no time limit, the referee could not stop the fight for any reason, and only the corner or the fighter

himself could call an end to the match. The bout would be contested in 15-minute rounds to a finish. It was an epic battle, and Royce more than held his own against the Japanese sensation. After 90 minutes of fighting, Royce's legs were beaten and battered and he told his corner he didn't think he could walk. Rorion threw in the towel and, for the first time in his MMA career, Royce Gracie was a loser.

Gracie continued his career in Japan, fighting for both Pride and K-1. He was a main event star, continuing the old school tradition of art versus art by taking on judo gold medalist **Hidehiko Yoshida** and Sumo Yokozuna **Akebono**.

Despite the loss to Sakuraba, to most fans in America Gracie was still a legend, the ultimate fighter who had never been defeated. They had never seen the Sakuraba fight, so to them, it was as if it never existed.

With a newly created television audience, most of whom were familiar with the legend of Royce Gracie, **Zuffa** took an interest in bringing Royce and the other early stars of the UFC back to the Octagon. Royce had been approached before, but the UFC could never afford him. This time he asked for a \$400,000 guarantee and a cut of the pay-per-view profits. Zuffa agreed and like that, the Gracie train was on the move to the UFC.

Gracie's opponent was long-time welterweight champion **Matt Hughes**. Hughes had been as big a failure at the box office as he'd been a success in the cage. He was considered a great, but boring, fighter. The second season of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** changed all that. He came into the Gracie fight as one of the UFC's biggest villains, the perfect foil for the legendary Brazilian. The pre-fight interviews were amazing. Gracie put it into terms everyone could understand: "This is my house. I built it."

The fight resonated with fans like none other that preceded it. More people bought this show on pay-per-view (620,000) than had purchased any other UFC in history. In the cage, the fight wasn't a classic. Hughes dismantled Gracie in the first round. But it wasn't all for naught — to beat the legend, Hughes employed the techniques the Gracies had shared with the world. It was a loss for Royce Gracie, but a win for Gracie Jiu-jitsu.

The Hughes fight would have been the perfect ending to a storybook career. The older fighter could have departed with his head held high, content that the younger man had to play his own game in order to best him. Instead, he fought one more time. Although he avenged his loss to Sakuraba, the win came with a heavy price. Gracie tested positive for the **steroid** Nandrolone in a post-fight screening. He protests his innocence, but MMA's all-time greatest fighter left the sport with a black cloud hanging over a glorious career.

Gracie, Royler

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 12/6/65

Debut: UVF 2 (6/24/96)

Career Record: 11-5

Notable Win: Noboru Asahi (Vale Tudo Japan 96)

Notable Losses: Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 8); Genki Sudo (K-1 MMA Romanex); Norifumi Yamamoto (Hero's 3)

Royler Gracie's 1999 **Pride** fight with **Kazushi Sakuraba** must have felt an awful lot like *déjà vu* for his father, **Helio Gracie**. Royler was fighting the best Japanese technician in the world, he was giving up 30 pounds, and then he got caught in a **Kimura** lock. It was like a flashback to Helio's own 1951 fight with **Masahiko Kimura** himself. In that contest, Helio's brother **Carlos** threw in the towel. At the Tokyo Dome, Royler's cornermen were willing to let him see it through until the end.

Instead, the referee stepped in to stop the fight. The Gracie contingent was furious. The rules of the fight dictated that only the fighters and their corners could stop the fight, but concerned for Royler's arm, the official put a stop to things with less than two minutes remaining. The Gracies were unconcerned, sure that the exceptionally flexible Royler would have survived the hold, or — like his cousin **Renzo** in a later match — allowed Sakuraba to rip his arm to shreds. For Royler it was a matter of honor. Once a fight started, he only wanted it to end with his arm raised or leaving on a stretcher.

It was a typical match for Royler during his MMA career. He was the most accomplished Gracie on the jiu-jitsu mats, winning the World jiu-jitsu title four times and winning the prestigious Abu Dhabi Combat Club (**ADCC**) Submission Wrestling Championship title three times in a row. But he never developed the overall skills he needed to succeed in the new era of cross-trained MMA.

Gracie, Ryan

Nickname: The Bulldog

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 8/14/74

Debut: Pride 10 (8/27/00)

Career Record: 5-2

Notable Wins: Tokimitsu Ishizawa (Pride 10); Ikuhisa Minowa (Pride Bushido 3)

Notable Losses: Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 12); Tokimitsu Ishizawa (Pride 15)

The Gracie bad boy, Ryan stayed true to the family's long-standing tradition of street fights and grandstand challenges. He was a solid professional fighter, with

wins over **Ikuhisa Minowa** and **pro wrestling**'s Kendo Kashin (Tokimitsu Ishizawa) but his fights in **Pride** were always overshadowed by his life outside the ring.

Ryan was, simply put, a wild man. He got in a number of street fights, was shot in the leg under questionable conditions, and died in prison after a crime spree in Rio de Janeiro. Even during his most stable days, when he was building his fighting career, Ryan was more famous for his fights that occurred on the street.

Ryan's most famous feud, albeit one that never ended in an officially sanctioned fight, was with fellow Brazilian grappler Wallid Ismail. The two were signed to fight several times but the fights always fell through . . . unless you mean in a nightclub or on the beach; then it was on. Ryan punched Wallid at a club and was rendered unconscious with a **guillotine choke**. The two had words on Pepino Beach where Ryan, in his own words, "spit in his face and called him a fag. I was trying to start a fight."

Much of the back-and-forth between the two men may have been for show. Both spent years trying to turn their war of words into a megafight. But other confrontations were all too real. A fight between the two was canceled when Gracie was arrested for stabbing a man in a bar fight.

His demons proved too much for him in the end. On December 14, 2007, Gracie went on a rampage, stealing a car, crashing it, and then attempting to steal a motorcycle. The cyclist hit him over the head with his helmet and a group of bystanders helped restrain him until police could arrive. Tests show Gracie was high on a cocktail of prescription and recreational drugs. A doctor prescribed some medication to calm Gracie, but the result was tragic. The next morning, Ryan Gracie was found dead in his cell. He was 33 years old. Ryan Gracie is survived by his wife Andrea and son Rayron.

Griffin, Forrest

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 7/1/79

Debut: RSF 5 (10/27/01)

Career Record: 17-6

Notable Wins: Jeff Mosen (WEFC 1); Stephan Bonnar (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1 Finale); Mauricio Rua (UFC 76); Quinton Jackson (UFC 86); Tito Ortiz (UFC 106)

Notable Losses: Jeremy Horn (IFC: Global Domination); Tito Ortiz (UFC 59); Keith Jardine (UFC 66); Rashad Evans (UFC 92); Anderson Silva (UFC 101)

Forrest Griffin is a little bit crazy. That needs to be noted up front. He is a man who enjoys pain, yet has had to learn to avoid punishment to be successful in the cage. He is smart and self-deprecating, yet will chase a rude driver to his



destination looking for a street fight. He's rich and famous, yet lives well below his means and drives a beat-up Scion. His friends all love him, yet to strangers and reporters he is often rude and standoffish. He's a walking conundrum. He may also be the most important fighter in **UFC** history.

Griffin loves to fight — always has. Growing up in Georgia, he took plenty of beatings, always coming back to look for more. A football player without the athletic talent to pursue sports as a career, Griffin was lucky enough to meet Rory and Adam Singer at the University of Georgia, where he quickly became obsessed with MMA. Griffin had an affinity for fighting and a rare toughness that allowed him to keep going long after others have given up. This wasn't enough for him to make it; making it big in MMA is hard and is often as much about good luck as about talent. Griffin was almost ready to fall back on Plan B, a job as a police officer, when he got the offer to join the cast of a new reality show called ***The Ultimate Fighter***.

The rest is history. Griffin narrowly beat **Stephan Bonnar** to win the light heavyweight prize. It was one of the best fights in UFC history, a display of willpower and balls that made many people fans for life. It was a fight that helped display for Spike TV executives exactly what MMA was all about. The UFC quickly signed a new television contract and the company's subsequent growth was nothing short of phenomenal.

After winning the title of "Ultimate Fighter," Griffin quickly announced his presence as a fighter to be reckoned with. Fighters in the gym were amazed

In Their Own Words: Griffin on validating TUF

"You know, obviously I think it's a good form of validation; two guys from the show fighting for the title is pretty impressive. And I think now they make the guys on the show fight like ten times before they're ever done with the show. So if you win that or you even come out of that and do well, you've got to think this guy has been fighting every other week . . . he's had four or five fights the way they're doing the show now. So I think they're earning it now. The guys watch the show. And each time you kind of want to top the guys that came before you. So I think it's almost a sense of pushing the envelope or trying to raise the bar."

by his work ethic and his refusal to give anything less than his best. Still, greatness seemed beyond his grasp. He lost to a past-his-prime **Tito Ortiz** and to **Keith Jardine**. The way he handled those losses, with humor and a shrug of his shoulders, helped Griffin remain a fan favorite. But he seemed miles away from a title shot.

The loss to Jardine seemed to flip a switch in Griffin's brain. He had already developed his skills significantly since the first fight with Bonnar. The Jardine fight made him even smarter. Now, when Griffin stepped in the cage, he was ready for whatever his opponent might do. Success followed. He beat the heavily favored **Mauricio Rua** to earn his first title shot. Griffin had come full circle. He had made his name on *The Ultimate Fighter*; now he was coming back to the show — as a coach. Griffin went on to upset **Quinton "Rampage" Jackson** over five grueling rounds to win the light heavyweight title. The people's champion was now the actual champion.

Success, hard to come by, was fleeting. Griffin lost his title in his very first defense. It was a proud moment for the *Ultimate Fighter* franchise, as the champion fell to fellow *TUF* alumnus **Rashad Evans**, but a low for Griffin. In a crowded light heavyweight picture, Griffin was suddenly shuffled back into the pack.

Griffin, Tyson

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 155

Born: 4/20/84

Debut: Gladiator Challenge 32 (11/18/04)

Career Record: 14-3

Notable Wins: Urijah Faber (Gladiator Challenge 42); Duane Ludwig (Strikeforce: Revenge); Clay Guida (UFC 72); Hermes Franca (UFC 103)

Notable Losses: Frank Edgar (UFC 67); Sean Sherk (UFC 90)

In many ways, Tyson Griffin is a 155-pound **Randy Couture**. Like his mentor, Griffin is a very good wrestler with surprisingly good hands. Like Couture, Griffin is also notorious for his lack of finishing prowess, with seven fights in a row going to the judges' score card. Combine those elements with a work ethic in the cage second to none and the result is a series of exceptional fights. This was both a good and a bad thing. Fans were treated to some all-time classics, including five bouts that won the coveted Fight of the Night honors from the **UFC** brass. But it also meant Griffin never had an easy night, putting his body through the rigors that can only be dished out in a 15-minute war.

Griffin ended the string of judges' decisions by knocking out **Hermes Franca** at **UFC 103**, becoming the first fighter ever to stop the super-tough veteran. Together with previous wins over a diverse set of fighters like Thiago Tavares and **Clay Guida**, the victory pointed towards Griffin being an enduring force in the **UFC**'s lightweight division. Just don't count on him fighting for another 20 years like his coach Couture. The similarities have to end somewhere.

Ground and pound

A fundamental ground fighting tactic in which a grappler secures a stable and relatively safe top position (see: **positional hierarchy**) and delivers punches, elbows, and knees to his opponent. Relentless ground and pound limits the effectiveness of submission attacks from the bottom fighter's **guard**, and creates



opportunities for the fighter on top to improve his position further, attempt a submission attempt of his own, or finish the fight with strikes. Pioneered by **Mark Coleman**, a dominant wrestler with limited submission skills, ground and pound has grown from one man's unique approach to a ubiquitous staple of the sport. Its greatest contemporary exponent is the peerless **Fedor Emelianenko**, who complements his smooth takedowns and fine positional grappling with the most ferocious ground and pound attack seen in ring or cage since "The Hammer" first showed the martial arts world just how important it was to get on top — and stay there.

Guard

A grappling position in which a fighter, on his back, uses his legs and hips to control his opponent's movements and prevent him from gaining a dominant pinning position. Although the list of guard variations is long and ever-expanding — take the rubber guard, spider guard, butterfly guard, half-butterfly guard, leg hook guard, high guard, X-guard, and De la Riva guard, for starters — we can simplify matters somewhat by distinguishing broadly between two categories. If the fighter has wrapped his legs tightly around his opponent's body, and locked them together, he's playing a closed guard; if his legs are not closed, but are used in such a way that his opponent is nevertheless kept in front of him, unable to pass, it's an open guard. There is a commonly held misconception that an open guard is offensive while a closed guard is necessarily defensive, but in truth there are a wide variety of sweeps and submissions available in each variation, making every guard position simultaneously a tool for both offense and defense. There are virtually no submission holds in MMA that can't be either executed or initiated from guard, whereas, in terms of submission attempts, the top player has only **leg locks** at his disposal — low percentage attacks in modern MMA that tend to sacrifice position.

This is not to suggest that the guard is an inherently advantageous position. Given roughly comparable grappling abilities, the guard is at best neutral for the fighter on his back. The top fighter can attempt to pass his opponent's guard and move into a dominant **side control** or **mount**, or he can choose to posture up and strike. The familiar saying that you can turn a black belt into a brown belt (and on down the line) with a solid shot to the head is never truer than in the guard position, with a strong top player maintaining his upright posture and dropping elbows.

See also **positional hierarchy**

Guida, Clay

Nicknames: The Carpenter, The Caveman

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 12/8/81

Debut: Silverback Classic 17 (7/26/03)

Career Record: 27-11

Notable Wins: Josh Thomson (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Gracie); Nate Diaz (UFC 94)

Notable Losses: Gilbert Melendez (Strikeforce: Revenge); Tyson Griffin (UFC 72); Roger Huerta (*The Ultimate Fighter* 6 Finale); Kenny Florian (UFC 107)

When Clay Guida is having a bad day at the gym — when he just doesn't feel like doing that extra rep, when he wants to quit and go home — he sucks it up. Because as hard as most fighters train, Guida knows what real work is.

When he was 21 years old Guida spent months on the Bering Sea, fishing in deep cold waters for crab. Life for Guida was like scenes from the television show *The Deadliest Catch*. He broke up ice to find the living treasure beneath, bringing up hundreds of pounds of ocean life while the 200-foot boat sat precariously in the windy and deadly ocean. Crews often worked for 20 hours a day. Nothing again will ever seem hard.

It's that work ethic that has made Guida a MMA star. The Chicago native burst onto the scene with an amazing win over Josh Thomson for **Strikeforce**. The hype on that card was for **Frank Shamrock** taking on Cesar Gracie. Afterward, no one could stop talking about the relentless wrestler who refused to lose against a bigger, stronger, and more athletic opponent. Guida has become a **UFC** fan favorite, fighting furiously with his trademark flowing hair flying into his eyes, while he tries to close his opponent's. His record is just 5-4 in the Octagon, and he may never win a UFC title, but it's not his success that makes fans love him — it's his ability to fight hard and fast for the entirety of three rounds. Guida may not win, but fans will always know they've been watching a fight.

Guillotine choke

A chokehold in which the attacker, either standing in front of his opponent or in **guard**, encircles the opponent's neck and restricts the flow of either blood or oxygen to the brain, depending on which variation of the technique is employed. The attacker wraps his strangling arm around the opponent's neck, and grips the wrist of the strangling arm with his free hand. Pulling the strangling arm high towards the sternum while keeping the shoulder of the strangling arm low, the attacker applies pressure to either the trachea or the carotid arteries, depending on the precise placement of the forearm. Relatively simple to apply, but difficult to master, the guillotine is among the most

common submission holds in MMA. Any time a fighter leaves his head low in the **clinch** or in a failed takedown attempt, the opportunity is there.

Strangely, the most widely viewed guillotine choke in the history of the sport came in a match initially seen by a very small audience. When venerable CBS news magazine *60 Minutes* ran a piece in late 2006 on the incredible growth of MMA, correspondent Scott Pelley spent time with **Pat Miletich** and **Renzo Gracie** as they prepared to face off in the now defunct **International Fight League**. Pelley's piece ended with Gracie securing an arm-in, flying guillotine (one of many possible variations) to finish Miletich in fine fashion in front of what turned out to be an audience of nearly 16 million.



Hackney, Keith

Nickname: The Giant Killer

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 200 lbs

Born: 1960

Debut: UFC 3 (9/9/94)

Career Record: 2-2

Notable Wins: Emmanuel Yarborough (UFC 3); Joe Son (UFC 4)

Notable Losses: Royce Gracie (UFC 4); Marco Ruas (Ultimate Ultimate 95)

Of the many early **UFC** competitors who took a handful of fights and then disappeared from the sport almost completely, Keith Hackney is perhaps the most fondly remembered. A tough-as-nails Kenpo **karate** practitioner with B-movie action star looks, Hackney seemed as though he'd leapt straight out of the pages of *Black Belt* magazine: black tank top; baggy, tapered-leg black pants with "Kenpo" emblazoned down one side; even full-on karate *hair*. Keith Hackney had The Look.

His short career was distinguished by two memorable wins, both by full-on pummeling. The first came against the enormous Emmanuel Yarborough, whom Hackney dropped with a big right before breaking his own hand delivering a series of unanswered punches to the back of Yarborough's head. It was ugly, but not as ugly as Hackney's next UFC appearance, in which he rained down blows upon the (later indicted) groin of *Austin Powers* henchman and alleged rapist Joe Son. Like many competitors of his era, Hackney was simply out of his depth when faced with skilled grapplers like **Royce Gracie** and **Marco Ruas**, but Hackney made his mark. He currently teaches in Roselle, Illinois.

Half-guard (Half-mount)

A grappling position in which the fighter on bottom traps one of his opponent's legs, preventing him from gaining the more dominant **mount** or **side control** positions. Sport **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** practitioners in particular have developed what was once a principally defensive position into a potentially dangerous place for the top fighter to be. The fighter on bottom works to

stay on his side, rather than flat on his back, so that he can threaten his opponent with a variety of sweeps, escapes to **rear mount**, and submission holds, including the **Kimura**, **knee bar**, **omoplata**, **triangle choke**, and **guillotine**. And for the fighter on bottom looking to scramble back to his feet, half-guard can actually be a much better position than full **guard**.

But despite the ever-increasing technical sophistication of the half-guard game, in modern MMA it's almost always more desirable to be on top, and half-guard — or half-mount, from the perspective of the top player — is no exception. There's no small number of submissions available from the top, such as the Kimura and Americana entangled arm locks, advanced **arm triangle** chokes like the D'Arce and brabo, and, for the fighter who is willing to risk position for submission, **leg locks**. The top fighter can work to continue his progress towards side control or mount, or he can choose to settle in and deliver short elbows and punches from a relatively stable position.

See also **positional hierarchy**

Hallman, Dennis

Nickname: Superman

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 12/2/75

Debut: UFCF: Clash of the Titans (1/11/97)

Career Record: 42-13-2 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Matt Hughes (Extreme Challenge 21, UFC 29)

Notable Losses: Dave Menne (Shooto: 10th Anniversary Event); Caol Uno (Shooto R.E.A.D. 3); Jens Pulver (UFC 33); Frank Trigg (WFA 3, UFC 48)

Here is a complete list of fighters who have managed the Herculean task of defeating **Matt Hughes**, the **UFC**'s greatest welterweight champion, not once, but twice: (i) **Georges St. Pierre**, who is arguably the most complete fighter in the history of the sport, and who looks set to dominate the division as Hughes himself once did; and (ii) Dennis Hallman, who is . . . Dennis Hallman. While there can be no doubt Hallman is a fine wrestler and a competent submission artist, he's also the very definition of a journeyman — which makes this all very strange. With over 50 verifiable fights (and 20-odd more, Hallman claims, that don't appear on any database) in an alphabet soup of MMA promotions, Hallman has bounced around the world, grinding out a living the hard way, while a man he tapped twice, first to a **guillotine choke**, then to an **arm bar** — both times in *under twenty seconds* — went on to fame and fortune as a main event fighter cashing enormous checks.



Hallman has been consistently active throughout his now long career, fighting as often as nine times a year, with the notable exception of 2008, when he served a year-long suspension after testing positive for both Drostanolone and Nandrolone following a **Strikeforce** bout against Jeremiah Metcalf. With that behind him, and a few more trademark first-round submission wins under his belt, Hallman signed a four-fight UFC deal in the summer of 2009. If Matt Hughes isn't nervous, he should be.

Hamill, Matt

Nickname: The Hammer

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 10/5/76

Debut: XFO 7 (6/24/06)

Career Record: 9-2

Notable Wins: Tim Boetsch (UFC Fight Night 13); Keith Jardine (*The Ultimate Fighter 2* Finale)

Notable Losses: Michael Bisping (UFC 75); Rich Franklin (UFC 88)

Matt Hamill is an Olympic television producer's dream. He would be the perfect feature for one of those pieces they love so much, the ones that humanize the otherwise unknowable athletes. Hamill is the **UFC's** first disabled athlete. Deaf since birth, his inability to sing in tune didn't stop him from growing into a hoss more than capable of tossing men around on the mat. He was good at it, even if he couldn't hear the satisfying grunt when they hit the ground.

Hamill was a standout wrestler at the Rochester Institute of Technology and is a Division III Hall of Famer. When he joined the cast of ***The Ultimate Fighter 3***, it quickly became apparent that he wasn't there as a nod to political correctness. Hamill wasn't just going to be competitive, he was the odds-on favorite to win. Even coach **Tito Ortiz**, one of the most dominant wrestlers to ever appear in the Octagon, couldn't control Hamill on the mat.

It just as quickly became apparent that Hamill was not a loveable and cuddly teddy bear. He was a bully and a bit of a jerk, so cocky that he was essentially a hearing-impaired **Matt Hughes**. In this at least, Hamill did more than almost anyone to break down stereotypes. Deaf athletes could not only compete with the best in the world; they could also be domineering frat boy jerks.

Amazingly, the other fighters in the house were so repellant that they managed to make the swaggering Hamill into a sympathetic figure. **Michael Bisping** was transparently jealous of Hamill's skills and conspired with Kendall Grove to take a sparring session to the next level, intentionally trying to hurt and embarrass Hamill. The season was building towards a climatic finale of Hamill versus Bisping, but it wasn't to be. Hamill was injured during his fight with Mike Nickels and couldn't continue. Bisping and Grove, Hamill's on-screen nemeses, went on to earn six-figure contracts with the UFC. Hamill would have to wait for his revenge.

After three wins in his first three UFC preliminary fights, Hamill earned his shot at Bisping. Fighting in Bisping's home country of England, Hamill gave Bisping all he could handle at UFC 75. He battered the Brit standing and

controlled him on the ground. Even Bisping's countrymen were shocked when he was announced as the winner. As the British fans booed the decision, Hamill's transformation from villain to hero was complete.

Since that fight — one of the most controversial decisions in UFC history — Hamill has established that he is more than a journeyman, but has yet to establish that he is a legitimate contender for UFC gold. A loss to former middleweight champion **Rich Franklin** at UFC 88 seemed to cement Hamill's standing as a fighter who fell just short of championship potential. Hamill will be just good enough to beat most everyone the UFC puts in front of him, while remaining just limited enough never to beat the best. His most important role will be one at which he's already excelled: shattering stereotypes and proving that a disability should never prevent you from pursuing a dream.

Hammer House

The Hammer House was different from some of the other famous fight teams in MMA's early years. **Ken Shamrock** moved his **Lion's Den** to progressively nicer digs as they got more and more successful. **Pat Miletich** did the same with his Miletich Fighting Systems team. And even when the team trained on the racquetball court of a local gym, they at least had a regular place to go work out.

Mark Coleman was a simpler man, one who took going back to basics to a whole different level. When his team (including **Kevin Randleman**, **Wes Sims**, and **Phil Baroni**) trained, they did it in Coleman's house. In the basement.

In Their Own Words: Wes Sims on the Hammer House

"In Columbus there is nothing. The Hammer House is Mark's basement. It was much like Stu Hart's Dungeon. There was a lot of blood spilled. We trained pretty hard. There were a lot of injuries in those early days. Broken nose. Broken fingers. Broken toes. Nothing severe, thank God, but there were a lot of injuries.

"I was a basketball player, but I always wanted to be a pro wrestler. My doctor was Mark's doctor and he hooked me up with Mark. I had seen the UFC, like the first five, and I was like, 'Wow. That's some crazy shit there.' When I met Mark [I] thought, 'Fuck it, I'll give it a swing.' He was getting ready to fight Ricardo Morais so he was ready to give me a shot. He needed a big boy in the gym with him. I went over and worked out and it was crazy. We just hit it off and we trained together ever since."

It was hard-core training, concentrating mostly on the **wrestling** base that made Coleman and Randleman NCAA champions. The two men would throw each other around the basement, banging into walls, dripping blood, and hugging when it was all over. The two became **UFC** heavyweight champion and Coleman ascended to the top of the sport in Japan as well. At the same time, Baroni became one of the most entertaining fighters in the sport.

Eventually, the members of the Hammer House all fell from the top of the game. While the sport moved towards cross-trained and well-rounded fighters, the Hammer House seemed trapped in a time warp where Coleman's patented **ground and pound** style was still unbeatable. Their games never moved to the next level, but their toughness, athleticism, and wrestling prowess made them a threat in any fight, as some of MMA's best — including **Mirko Cro Cop** and **Fedor Emelianenko** — learned to their dismay.

Hansen, Joachim

Nickname: Hellboy

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 5/26/79

Debut: FinnFight 3 (11/6/99)

Career Record: 19-10-1

Notable Wins: Rumina Sato (Shooto 2003: 3/18 in Korakuen Hall); Takanori Gomi (Shooto 2003: 8/10 in Yokohama Gymnasium); Gesias Cavalcante (Shooto 2004: 7/16 in Korakuen Hall); Caol Uno (K-1 Hero's 1); Shinya Aoki (Dream 5)

Notable Losses: Vitor Ribeiro (Shooto 2003: Year-End Show); Hayato Sakurai (Pride Bushido 9); Shinya Aoki (Pride Shockwave 2006)

"I would rather have bleeding hemorrhoids than fight for the **UFC**," Joachim Hansen once said. This colorful image helps explain why Hansen remains a virtual unknown to North American MMA fans, despite being one of the premier lightweight fighters in the world. A slick grappler and dangerous striker with some of the best knees in the business, Hansen has consistently fought top competition in Japan, putting together a resume unlike any other in his weight class.

Hansen built his reputation as an aggressive attacking fighter in the **Shooto** organization, earning early career wins over legendary submission artist **Rumina Sato** and the heavy-handed **Takanori Gomi**, taking Gomi's Shooto welterweight title in the process. In his first title defense, however, Hansen tapped to an **arm triangle** by **Vitor "Shaolin" Ribeiro** in an outstanding grappling contest. Surprisingly, it was the last championship Hansen would hold for five years.

Hansen earned a tough decision win over a young **Gesias Cavalcante**, and knocked out both **Caol Uno** and **Masakazu Iminari** with devastating knees before ruining a second shot at Shooto gold against **Tatsuya Kawajiri** a mere eight

seconds into that fight when he connected with a match-ending kick to the groin. It was not until the **Dream** Lightweight Grand Prix 2008 that Hansen truly took center stage, dropping a grueling first round match to **Eddie Alvarez** before earning his way into the tournament finals with a reserve bout submission win over Kultar Gill. In the tournament final, Hansen avenged his 2006 **Pride** loss to **Shinya Aoki**, finishing the “Tobikan Judan” with punches on the ground to become the first Dream lightweight champion. It was a fitting reward: no one in the sport has put on better fights against better competition than Joachim Hansen.

Han, Volk

Real name: Magomedhan Amanulajevich Gamzathanov

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 230 lbs

Born: 4/15/61

Debut: 5/20/00

Career Record: 7-1

Notable Wins: Bobby Hoffman (Rings: King of Kings 2000 Block B); Andrei Kopylov (Rings: Russia vs. Bulgaria)

Notable Loss: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Rings: King of Kings 2000 Final)

Han is, in the opinion of many experts, the single best professional wrestler in the history of that sport. His gift was an ability to make his scripted contests look real, fluidly moving into and out of holds and building the drama for an explosive finish.

His skill quickly made him the top foreign foil for **Rings** frontman **Akira Maeda**. The two were great opponents, as Han's flashy submissions were pitted against Maeda's hard kicks and devastating suplexes.

In 2000, upon Maeda's retirement, Rings went from fake fights to legitimate contests. Han was 39 years old and many expected him to fade into the background with his old rival. Instead, he established that everything he had pretended to be for the past decade was real. Han really was a **sambo** expert. He really was a tough submission fighter. And he could look just as tough when the fights were real as he did when they were fake. His only career loss came to the man who would soon establish himself as the world's best heavyweight, **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**.

Not only did Han establish his bona fides, he was also the man responsible for helping **Fedor Emelianenko** prepare for Rings competition. The two, together with Andrei Kopylov, **Sergei Kharitonov**, and Mikhail Iliokhine, pushed each other to new heights and made the Russian Top Team one of the best training camps in the sport. Although Fedor left the team to join Red Devil after a dispute, he has said he retains much respect for Han.

“I regard Han very well. He is one of trailblazers in Rings,” Emelianenko said. “And though Rings is fairly far from **Pride**, personally my experiences of fights in this organization were very useful to me.”

Hazelett, Dustin

Nickname: McLovin'

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 4/29/86

Debut: KOTC: Dayton (10/23/04)

Career Record: 12-5

Notable Wins: Rhalan Gracie (Gracie Fighting Challenge: Team Gracie vs. Team Hammer House); Josh Burkman (*The Ultimate Fighter 7* Finale); Tamdan McCrory (UFC 91)

Notable Loss: Tony DeSouza (UFC: The Final Chapter)

In an era where every fighter who steps into the ring or the Octagon at the sport's highest level has trained extensively in submission fighting, nobody should be able to do the things Dustin Hazelett has been able to do. Only fighters of **Demian Maia's** or **Shinya Aoki's** caliber have put on the kinds of grappling clinics Hazelett managed against Josh Burkman and Tamdan McCrory in back-to-back **UFC** appearances in 2008. When Hazelett climbed up Josh Burkman's back after a half-successful whizzer takedown/uchi mata **judo** throw and transitioned seamlessly into an **arm bar**, it wasn't just the Submission of the Night; it was one of the most amazing submission finishes anyone had ever seen in mixed martial arts.

Clearly, Hazelett developed a taste for the kind of bonus money that comes along with displays like that, because he was right back at it a few months later against “The Barn Cat,” Tamdan McCrory. From **guard**, Hazelett attacked with an **omoplata**, which is generally used as a transitional move in contemporary MMA. It's exceedingly hard to finish even the tightest omoplata without your opponent rolling to relieve the pressure or simply slipping out of the hold. But Hazelett was attacking early in the fight, before the sweat would be thick enough to facilitate an escape. Hazelett stuck with the hold for over a minute, slowly breaking down McCrory's posture until he could contort the arm at a truly unnatural angle for another spectacular arm bar.

At only 24 years of age, there's still a lot we don't know about what kind of fighter Dustin Hazelett is going to be. The long, lean Hazelett might not turn out to have the athleticism or the chin to hang with fighters at the top of the UFC's deep welterweight division. But for now, at least, we'll just sit back and enjoy the astounding finishes this young **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt has already proven himself capable of.

HDNet

Mark Cuban, the brash billionaire owner of the National Basketball Association's Dallas Mavericks, wasn't the first entrepreneur to see dollar signs in the burgeoning success of the **UFC**. Before Calvin Ayre went belly up, he wasn't even the wealthiest. But he might be the savviest competitor the UFC could face. Savvy enough to realize that he would need some promotional muscle to battle the **Fertitta brothers** on their own turf. Savvy enough to seek out the very best money could buy: Vince and Linda McMahon, the brains behind the legendary World Wrestling Entertainment juggernaut.

That potentially devastating (and undoubtedly wildly entertaining) pairing never happened. The McMahons decided to stick with what they were best at — promoting wrestling — fearing another network partnership after the XFL debacle. Cuban, after just two events, took a step back from promoting MMA. Instead, HDNet became the station of choice for any independent promoter with a fight card and a high definition camera.

The station, struggling to establish a foothold in the suddenly crowded high definition television market it had helped pioneer, featured fights big and small, all designed to attract the coveted 18–34 male demographic. HDNet showed everything from the big budget Japanese **Dream** and K-1 cards, featuring the best non-UFC talent in the world, to glorified independent shows like Ring of Fire and Ring of Combat, in which the fighters were virtual unknowns.

Although Cuban remains a vocal MMA supporter, he seems to have decided not to put his money where his mouth is. He's content to let others challenge the **Zuffa** empire, becoming simply the medium to present those challengers to those viewers who want their carnage in the cage at 1080i. The dueling press conferences between Cuban and the equally boisterous UFC President **Dana White** will remain just a figment of our imaginations . . . for now. With Cuban anything is possible.

Heel hook: see **Leg locks**

Henderson, Dan

Nicknames: Hollywood, Hendo

Height: 6'

Weight: 185–205 lbs

Born: 8/24/70

Debut: Brazil Open 1997 (6/15/97)

Career Record: 25–8

Notable Wins: Carlos Newton (UFC 17); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Rings: King of Kings 99); Murilo Bustamante (Pride Final Conflict 2003); Wanderlei Silva (Pride 33); Rich Franklin (UFC 93)

Notable Losses: Wanderlei Silva (Pride 12); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride 24); Quinton Jackson (UFC 75); Anderson Silva (UFC 82); Jake Shields (Strikeforce: Nashville)

There is a lot of talk in the MMA world from guys who claim they just plain love to fight. Dan Henderson is more candid and more open than most fighters. He got into it for the money. Henderson was an **Olympian** in both 1992 and 1996 but never medaled, finishing 10th and 12th respectively. He was looking for one more chance, but with a wife and later a new baby on the way, the \$650 stipend he got monthly to train wasn't going to cut it.

Henderson was days away from letting his dream die and becoming a chiropractor when he got a call from two old **wrestling** buddies, Rico Chiapparelli and **Randy Couture**. They wanted him to join their new fight team, the Real American Wrestlers (RAW), and supplement his income in the new sport of MMA. Henderson's wrestling career got new life and MMA got one of the sport's all-time greats.

For his first several MMA contests, Henderson had almost no experience or training. He hadn't worked on submissions much or done any **boxing** training outside of pounding a heavy bag. But he was a quick study. He had to be, be-



cause he was thrown in with the lions from the very beginning. After winning an open-weight tournament in Brazil in 1997, he won the first **UFC** lightweight tournament by beating the tough Alan Goes and future champion **Carlos Newton** all in one night. His bank account got a boost when he won the inaugural **Rings** King of Kings tournament in early 2000, earning plenty of respect to go along with the then unheard-of purse of \$200,000.

Henderson stands out just as much for his level of competition as he does for his four tournament victories and multiple championships. He's taken on a who's who of MMA: Carlos Newton, both **Nogueira** brothers, **Wanderlei Silva**,

In Their Own Words: Dan Henderson on getting started in MMA

"When I started MMA, I was still trying to make the 2000 Olympic team and I was fighting to support myself. There is zero money in wrestling, so I was just doing MMA for the money. I didn't know a lot and had never even sparred before. Going into UFC 17, I knew Carlos Newton was a jiu-jitsu guy, but he came out kicking my leg. I had done very little training and no sparring and I didn't know how to stop the kicks. It was a great night, despite a little bit of a sore leg, but I wish I had known a little more MMA then. It would have been a lot easier night.

"Even with Rings, I was still just in it for the money. It was important because it allowed me to train for wrestling full-time. They offered me an appearance fee just to show up and compete. It was a 32-man open weight class tournament. I didn't expect to win; I was just looking to bring back some appearance money for my wrestling training. I did almost no MMA training going into Rings.

"I won my first two fights in that tournament against a Russian wrestler and a tough Japanese fighter, Kanehara. I expected trouble from the Russian, who had took second in the world in Greco-Roman wrestling at 220 pounds, but he was a complete wuss. Some guys just didn't like getting hit and I kned him in the body and he collapsed to the mat and tapped out.

"On the final night of the tournament I fought **Gilbert Yvel**, Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira, and Babalu, all on the same night. That was probably my toughest night of fighting. I only had a half hour between my last two fights and Nogueira had hurt my knee pretty bad when he jumped to pull **guard**. I almost didn't fight at all.

"That was just a few months before the Olympic trials. When I didn't make the team, I still went to Sydney as a training alternate. That was when I was contacted by Pride. I was going to fight **Vitor Belfort**, but then he hurt his hand and they told me I was fighting a guy I hadn't heard of. Some guy named Wanderlei Silva."

Murilo Bustamante, Quinton Jackson, Anderson Silva, and Rich Franklin, among others. Despite wrestling at just 181 pounds, the bulk of Henderson's MMA career happened at 205 pounds, even competing in open weight and heavy-weight bouts.

No matter who it was that Henderson stepped into the ring or cage to fight, he was guaranteed to get a heck of a battle. Despite his wrestling pedigree, Henderson discovered he had a hard right hand. He actually preferred going toe-to-toe with the hardest hitters in the sport.

Like his friend Couture (with whom he left RAW to form **Team Quest** in 2000), Henderson peaked late. He beat former UFC middleweight champion Murilo Bustamante to become **Pride's** first champion at 183 pounds. Because Bustamante had left the UFC over a contract dispute and never lost his title in the ring, Henderson was considered by most to be the true champion in that weight class.

Despite this success, Henderson hated fighting as a middleweight. Cutting weight was hard, especially as he got older, and he felt he was more than competitive at 205 pounds. It was at that weight that he fought Pride legend Wanderlei Silva in 2007, avenging his first career loss and winning the Pride Championship in a second weight class.

When **Zuffa** bought Pride, Henderson's status as champion earned him main event title unification bouts at both light heavyweight and middleweight levels — bouts he lost to the UFC's reigning champions Quinton Jackson and Anderson Silva. Just as Henderson, now in his late thirties, seemed destined to fade from the limelight, he was given a second chance to make his name in the UFC, where fans had never seen him at his best. He earned a prestigious coaching role on **The Ultimate Fighter 9** by beating Rich Franklin at UFC 93. His fellow coach was British star **Michael Bisping**, who Henderson both called a douche *and* knocked out in memorable fashion at UFC 100. Bisping was knocked cold and Henderson got an extra shot in for good measure, perhaps punishing the Brit for all the reality television trash talk.

His biggest win inside the Octagon was also his last UFC appearance. Upset about likeness rights and sponsorship issues, Henderson left Zuffa to sign with **Strikeforce**, preferring the bigger stage on CBS television. His first fight with his new organization was a huge disaster, however, for all concerned. Henderson lost to **Jake Shields** who almost immediately signed with the UFC. It was an ignominious debut for Strikeforce's new star, who vowed, at the age of 39, that cutting to middleweight was too hard. From now on, Dan Henderson will compete at light heavyweight only.

Herman, Ed

Nickname: Short Fuse

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 10/2/80

Debut: Xtreme Ring Wars 2 (5/10/03)

Career Record: 19-7

Notable Wins: Nick Thompson (Hand2Hand Combat); Dave Menne (Extreme Challenge 63); Joe Doerkson (UFC 78)

Notable Losses: Joe Doerkson (SF 7); Kendall Grove (*The Ultimate Fighter* 3 Finale); Demian Maia (UFC 83)

“Short Fuse” Ed Herman was the **Stephan Bonnar** of *The Ultimate Fighter* 3. Like Bonnar, he put up a spirited battle in the finals, losing to Kendall Grove by unanimous decision. As with Bonnar, **UFC President Dana White** was so impressed with his moxie that he offered Herman a UFC contract in the face of his upset loss. And like Bonnar, Herman has failed to thrive in the UFC, working his way squarely into the middle of the pack with a 4-4 record in his first eight fights.

As similar as they were, in some ways Herman was the anti-Bonnar. While Stephan was laid back and funny, Herman was intense, living up to his nickname of Short Fuse. A student of **Randy Couture** and **Matt Lindland**, Herman felt he should have been one of the favorites to win the reality show. Then it was time for coaches **Tito Ortiz** and **Ken Shamrock** to select their teams. Pick after pick went by and Herman seethed on the sidelines. When Shamrock selected him as his last pick, Herman was ready to explode.

His anger drove him to the finals of the show, but it sometimes gets him into trouble. His losses in the UFC have often been the result of his inability to keep control of his emotions and keep to his game plan. Yet, despite his meagre record, there have been enough flashes of brilliance, a demonstrated ability standing and on the ground, to make many think that the entire Ed Herman story hasn't been told.

Hero's

Dream isn't the first foray into mixed martial arts for Fighting Entertainment Group (FEG), the parent corporation behind kickboxing giant K-1. Before there was Dream, there was Hero's, with its elaborate television productions, its strange weight classes, and its even stranger punctuation. Before that, there was K-1 Romanex (a name meant to evoke the gladiatorial combat of the ancients), and there was no shortage of MMA on year-end K-1 Premium Dynamite!! cards, either. But it was Hero's, launched March 26, 2005, under

the direction of **Rings** pioneer **Akira Maeda**, that marked FEG's commitment to mixed martial arts with a steady, ongoing series of events.

Hero's was an instant ratings hit, offering **Pride** serious competition from the very beginning. They built fighters like **Kid Yamamoto** and **Yoshihiro Akiyama** into major native draws, and brought in foreign stars like **Royce Gracie**, K-1 regular **Bob Sapp**, and even reigning **UFC** welterweight champion **B.J. Penn** in a stunt that cost Penn his title. Hero's was the first major MMA organization to tap directly into the Korean market, running in Seoul in 2005, and even ventured into America in 2007 with K-1 Hero's Dynamite!! USA, an event that saw NFL veteran Johnnie Morton knocked out by a comedian, Royce Gracie test positive for **steroids**, and the debuting **Brock Lesnar**'s scheduled opponent fail his medical basically for being a giant. It didn't go well.

Network television ratings — the be-all and end-all for Japanese promotions — declined significantly throughout 2007, and the switch to the Pride-styled Dream in 2008 did nothing to end the slide for FEG and their Tokyo Broadcasting System partners. As evidenced by the numbers, the glory years of Japanese mixed martial arts now seem firmly a part of the past.

Herring, Heath

Nickname: Texas Crazy Horse

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 250 lbs

Born: 3/2/78

Debut: USWF 4 (4/12/97)

Career Record: 28-14 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Mark Kerr (Pride 15); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 19)

Notable Losses: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride 17, Pride Critical Countdown 2004, UFC 73); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride 23); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride 26); Brock Lesnar (UFC 87)

Heath Herring is more than just an also-ran with intricately styled, outrageously bad hair. A dangerous, **sambo**-based grappler with solid kickboxing and powerful knees, Herring spent much of his career among the sport's top heavyweights before settling into his now-familiar gatekeeper role.

Herring first came to prominence in his second **Pride** fight, where he used an impressively active **guard** to weather the storm against the enormous **Tom Erikson**. After stalling Erikson out enough to earn a standup, a visibly fired-up Herring landed two quick high kicks, spun to Erikson's back with the quickness of a middleweight, and sunk in a **rear naked choke** for a huge upset win. Impressive TKO finishes against **Enson Inoue** and a still marginally relevant **Mark Kerr** landed Herring in Pride's first heavyweight title fight. In his first and only shot at championship gold, Herring came up just short, dropping a



decision to the great **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**.

Herring soon found himself across the ring from another legend in the making. Underdog **Fedor Emelianenko** absolutely pounded Herring to a doctor's stoppage in a contest to determine the number one contender to Nogueira's title. And things didn't get any easier from there: Herring's very next fight after the Emelianenko drubbing came against **Mirko Cro Cop**, who finished Herring early in the first. Five years later, when Herring was steam-rolled by another future heavyweight champion, **Brock Lesnar** (who broke Herring's orbital bone seconds into a fight that went the distance), it seemed in keeping with a well-established pattern.

Between his Pride and **UFC** runs, Herring had a brief but controversial stint in K-1. At the 2005 K-1 Dynamite!! New Year's Eve show, Herring was scheduled to face Yoshihiro Nakao, but the fight was over before it began. Literally. During the referee's instructions in the center of the ring, Nakao decided to spice up the stare-down by leaning forward and kissing Herring. Herring reacted with a tight right hook to the chin that put Nakao to the floor, and left him in no condition to actually fight. "He tried to kiss me on the lips like a homosexual," Herring yelled from his corner, "I'm not gay! I'm *not* gay." Although the fight was originally ruled a disqualification, K-1 officials

ultimately concluded that both fighters had committed fouls, and changed the ruling to an unusually fabulous no contest.

Horn, Jeremy

Nickname: Gumby

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 185-205 lbs

Born: 8/25/75

Debut: Atlanta Fights (3/1/96)

Career Record: 85-19-5

Notable Wins: Chuck Liddell (UFC 19); Gilbert Yvel (Pride 21); Vernon White (KOTC 23); Forrest Griffin (IFC: Global Domination)

Notable Losses: Frank Shamrock (UFC 17); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (WEF 8); Kiyoshi Tamura (Colosseum 2000); Randy Couture (Rings: King of Kings 2000); Anderson Silva (Gladiator FC Day 2); Chuck Liddell (UFC 54); Nate Marquardt (UFC 81)

Jeremy Horn is not a great athlete. It's important to get that out of the way immediately. He doesn't look like a fighter; he's more like a dumpy, balding assistant manager at your local Office Depot. That's what makes his accomplishments so impressive, even more than at first glance. He's our greatest cerebral fighter, winning 82 fights with his big brain and his impeccable technical skills.

Horn has been a fighting fanatic as long as he can remember. The Dog Brothers would be proud of Horn — he and his brothers started stick fighting almost as soon as they could walk. Later he became a black belt under Robert Bussey, making him a certified ninja. Martial arts were fun, but it was only after seeing his first **UFC** at 19 that Horn devoted his life to them.

His first fight was in a warehouse in Atlanta. Many more followed throughout the Midwest. Horn met **Pat Miletich** through their mutual friend and manager **Monte Cox** and soon after moved to Bettendorf, Iowa, to train with what would become the top fight team in the world. By the time he fought **UFC** middleweight (now called light heavyweight) champion **Frank Shamrock** at **UFC 17** in 1998, Horn was a grizzled veteran of 14 professional fights, including a draw with **UFC** legend **Dan Severn**, who outweighed him by 50 pounds.

Horn more than held his own with Shamrock, who was the very best fighter in the world. It opened his eyes to his own abilities and soon Horn was fighting all the time. He fought 21 times in 1999 alone, his only setback a questionable decision loss to hometown favorite Hiromitsu Kanehara in **Rings**. That included three wins in the **UFC**, one over future champion **Chuck Liddell**.

Horn never fought that many times again in a single calendar year, but stayed plenty active. His 106 fights include battles with some of the very best

competitors in the world including **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, **Randy Couture**, **Anderson Silva**, and **Forrest Griffin**. All told, Horn fought seven current or future world champions.

All that fighting may have worn on Horn. He lost several times in 2001, including an upset submission loss to Elvis Sinosic at UFC 30. With that, Horn was gone from the UFC, but hardly done with fighting. He fought regularly in Japan, for Rings and then for **Pride**, and helped break in the Canadian market with several appearances for UCC.

In 2005, the UFC, desperate for contenders to take on Liddell — by then the dominant light heavyweight champion — brought Horn back for an immediate title shot. Liddell had grown immensely as a fighter, while Horn had reached his peak years earlier. This time Liddell dominated, beating Horn to a pulp over four long and excruciating rounds. He was knocked down several times and the fight was mercifully stopped when Horn told the referee he couldn't see.

Already outgunned athletically, Horn was now also routinely outsized by opponents at 205 pounds. He made a long overdue drop down to middleweight and won his next two UFC fights. After a stint with the **IFL**, including a loss to **Matt Lindland**, Horn was back in the UFC. This time it was clear that Horn, despite his prowess on the mat, was no match for the younger, hungrier, and more athletic fighters in the modern UFC. He lost three in a row and was released from his UFC contract. But with several fights on the independent circuit since his departure from the UFC, it seems clear his fighting career is far from done.



Howard, Harold

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 240 lbs

Born: 1958

Debut: UFC 3 (9/9/94)

Career Record: 2-3

Notable Win: Royce Gracie (UFC 3)

Notable Loss: Steve Jennum (UFC 3)

“My name is Harold Clarence Howard. I’m representing Canada and Niagara Falls in the Ultimate Fighting Challenge. We have a saying back home that if you’re comin’ on . . . *come on*.” These are the immortal words Howard spoke before his **UFC** debut against Roland Payne. It wasn’t what he said so much as how he said it — tearing off his wraparound shades to reveal the man in all his crazy-eyed, mulleted glory — that has made Howard so fondly remembered by fans who watched those strange early events.

A **karate** man and a Japanese jiu-jitsu practitioner, Howard made short work of Payne in his first tournament bout, knocking him out in under a minute to earn a shot at then two-time champion **Royce Gracie**. But Gracie, exhausted from a grueling back-and-forth contest against **Kimo Leopoldo**, wasn’t able to fight. Rather than forfeit the match backstage, Gracie entered the Octagon only to have his corner throw in the towel before the match could begin. Howard was devastated, as he would explain to **Sherdog**’s Jason Probst years later. “When I won the first fight, all we were saying was ‘We got to Gracie.’ That was the only thing we wanted to do; that was the biggest disappointment.” But the disappointment didn’t end there. “I remember saying, ‘At least we got [**Ken**] **Shamrock**.’ Shamrock’s entourage was behind me when we got into the ring. I bowed to him, and I thought he was gonna get in. We got [**Steve**] **Jennum** in there instead.”

Howard didn’t last long against Jennum, but long enough to attempt a forward flip kick that remains, to this day, a truly astounding sight. If you wanted to reduce everything we thought we knew about martial arts before MMA into a single image, you couldn’t do much better than a gap-toothed, mulleted, tough-as-nails dude in **gi** pants, a tank top, and a well-worn black belt aerial somersaulting towards his opponent. If you’d ever wondered how Ken from *Street Fighter II* would fare in the Octagon — and naturally, many of us did — here was your answer. “I told you, if it worked, it worked,” Howard said when it was all over. “And it didn’t — I didn’t. So in the end it didn’t.”

Huerta, Roger

Nickname: El Matador

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 5/20/83

Debut: EC: Best of the Best 2 (8/2/03)

Career Record: 21-4-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Win: Clay Guida (*The Ultimate Fighter 6* Finale)

Notable Loss: Kenny Florian (UFC 87)

In 2007 the **UFC** got a slew of good publicity. Article after article appeared in mainstream magazines, newspapers, and on Web sites. They all told the same story: the sport was growing at a tremendous rate. The **Fertitta brothers** had bought the company for a mere \$3 million. Now it was estimated to be worth \$1 billion.

It was great news on its face, but to Roger Huerta it was infuriating. Huerta had come up hard — surviving abuse, living in foster homes or on the street. He was sleeping on rooftops when no better place could be found to rest his head. After a wild trip from America to El Salvador, he even weathered a civil war. Huerta had survived the worst life was likely to throw at him. He became comfortable, even wealthy. But he wondered, increasingly aloud, if the UFC is doing so well, why was he touring the country promoting **Zuffa** on a \$50 per day per diem? He was featured on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and was the company's lone hope of reaching the dormant Hispanic audience. If the UFC was making millions, why was he being paid just \$17,000 to fight and \$17,000 to win?

While Huerta continued to thrive in the cage, winning six in a row, including a come from behind classic over **Clay Guida**, he was growing

In Their Own Words: Roger Huerta on taking it to the next level

"It really took a different level of toughness, a mentality which I didn't think I'd have to reach until I was fighting for the title. In that third round I was a different fighter. I was willing to die in there with Guida, basically. I was out for several seconds when he knocked me down. Everything went red for me. But it never even crossed my mind that I was going to lose the fight. Even when he rocked me, I knew. Never — not even after I got rocked. I was going to find a way to win, some way or form.

"It never crosses my mind that I'm going to lose. No matter what is happening, my mentality is that I'm going to win. I'm going to win every time. I'll do whatever it takes; it doesn't matter what it takes. Anything within the rules, of course. I'll find a way to win."

increasingly disgruntled. After his first Octagon loss to **Kenny Florian** at UFC 87, Huerta announced he would not be signing a new contract with the UFC. He was leaving Zuffa to pursue success on his own terms, in the movie business. The final fight on his UFC contract was with Gray Maynard at UFC Fight Night 19, where Huerta dropped a split decision to the rising contender.

Hughes, Matt

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 10/13/73

Debut: JKD Challenge (1/1/98)

Career Record: 45-7

Notable Wins: Dave Menne (Extreme Challenge 21); Carlos Newton (UFC 34, UFC 38); Hayato Sakurai (UFC 36); Sean Sherk (UFC 42); Frank Trigg (UFC 45, UFC 52); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 50); Royce Gracie (UFC 60); B.J. Penn (UFC 63); Matt Serra (UFC 98)

Notable Losses: Dennis Hallman (Extreme Challenge 21, UFC 29); Jose Landi-Jons (Warriors War 1); B.J. Penn (UFC 46); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 65, UFC 79); Thiago Alves (UFC 85)

Believe it or not, once upon a time Matt Hughes was considered a boring fighter. The **UFC** painted him with the same brush as the milquetoast **Rich Franklin**, portraying him as a generic, respectful Midwesterner. While Hughes was enormously successful in the cage, once winning 13 fights in a row against top competition, at the box office he was a complete bust. It was only



after his appearance on the second season of *The Ultimate Fighter* that Hughes realized his potential as one of the UFC's premier villains.

Additional time in the spotlight only added fuel to Hughes' fire. Whether it was his cocky pre-fight interview before his bout with the legendary **Royce Gracie** in 2006, his comparing himself with the biblical Queen Esther, or his autobiographical admission that he and his twin brother Mark once beat up their own father, Hughes was the gift that kept on giving.

His grating personality shouldn't diminish his obvious excellence in the cage. Hughes is undoubtedly one of the very best fighters of all time, as dominant a champion as the UFC has ever seen. Hughes took the **ground and pound** style of **Mark Coleman** forward a generation. He was more than an excellent wrestler; with the help of great coaches like **Jeremy Horn** and **Pat Miletich**, he was able to develop an adequate submission and striking game as well. Hughes used these tools to beat a who's who of the best fighters in the world. Conquests included **Carlos Newton**, **Frank Trigg**, **Sean Sherk**, **B.J. Penn**, **Royce Gracie**, and **Georges St. Pierre**.

By the time he was dethroned by St. Pierre at UFC 65, Hughes was relieved to relinquish the title. Except for a brief hiccup when he lost the belt to Penn at UFC 46, Hughes had been the top fighter in the division for five years. The nonstop pressure got to him, and the years of training had taken their toll on a fighter who would rather be anywhere else than the training room. Hughes

In Their Own Words: Matt Hughes on his fight with the legendary Royce Gracie

"I had no idea it was going to be that easy. When it hit the ground I thought, 'Royce Gracie is going to pull out a magical Gracie submission that I've never heard of and he's gonna submit me.' So as soon as I take him down you can tell that I'm just relaxing and not really doing anything, trying to stay tight so he doesn't submit me. It doesn't take very long before I figure out he doesn't have any submission moves whatsoever. For the rest of the fight, I never felt threatened one bit. I never felt threatened by a submission hold or any type of a strike from the bottom. It took me about 30 to 45 seconds to figure out he's not going to be able to do anything. I went for the straight **arm bar** and finally gave up on that because I didn't want to waste all my energy and so I thought I'd go to another submission. I do think I'm more of an athlete than anyone he's faced but I think this sport has passed Royce Gracie by. It's evolved and Royce has not evolved. He just hasn't kept up with the sport."

simply needed a break from the mental and physical pressures of being the best in the world.

In his post-title run, Hughes maintained a visible position in the sport. He and **Matt Serra** set the standard as coaches on *The Ultimate Fighter* during the show's sixth season, building up a grudge that was still fiery hot months later when the two finally met in the cage. Hughes beat Serra by decision, but that fight, and a previous loss to **Thiago Alves**, showed a fighter who had lost a step or three. Hughes had gotten by for years by being stronger and quicker than the other guy in the cage. That didn't seem to be the case anymore. While Hughes was a big enough star to maintain fan interest, it seemed apparent that he would never again fight at the championship level.

Hume, Matt

Nickname: The Wizard

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 7/14/66

Debut: Pancrase: Pancrash! 3 (4/21/94) **Career Record:** 5-0

Notable Wins: Eric Paulson (Extreme Fighting 3); Pat Miletich (Extreme Fighting 4)

It was July 6, 1994, and **Pancrase** was the most talked-about new wrestling promotion in Japan. Called "hybrid wrestling," Pancrase was **professional wrestling** with standard professional wrestling rules. The caveat? Pancrase was real. Or at least it was supposed to be. Many people had their suspicions and on this night in the Amagasaki Gym those suspicions were confirmed. Not all Pancrase matches were on the up and up.

Hume was taking on **Ken Shamrock**, Pancrase's top foreign fighter and their representative in the new **Ultimate Fighting Championship**. Throughout the fight Hume tossed Shamrock with some serious high amplitude throws, despite Shamrock's 50-pound weight advantage and his strong wrestling skill. This was questionable, but it was possible Hume was just that good a wrestler. The finish of the fight was the final straw: Shamrock launched Hume with a pro wrestling throw called the Northern Lights Suplex and finished him off with a **Kimura** lock. The whole sequence was obviously phony — what pro wrestlers call a work. To those who knew what they were watching, the cat was out of the bag.

Of course, his involvement in the development of Japanese MMA, warts and all, shouldn't prevent anyone from recognizing what a great martial artist Hume was and would become. "The Wizard" would make the short list of the most influential trainers of all time and his influence on Sheik Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, son of Sultan Zayed of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, helped lead to the formation of the **ADCC's** World Submission

In Their Own Words: Hume on his training philosophy

"Teaching a student to be a martial artist instead of a fighter is the most important thing to me. Anyone can be a fighter – I do not respect or admire someone because they fight. I respect and admire those who make a lifetime commitment to being the best martial artist they can be. Studying all aspect of martial arts: technique in all areas, conditioning, mental strength, respect, ethics, loyalty, and the other important things that make a person a unique martial artist instead of a random fighter.

"I have been teaching and competing in Pankration, **Muay Thai**, **boxing**, and submission **wrestling** all my life. I trained, taught, and competed before UFC or the term MMA existed. My goals are as a martial artist and have nothing to do with MMA or UFC or any other organization. If they all disappeared today, I would still be doing the same thing that I was doing before their existence that helped put them on the map when they arrived. If you have the right mindset, you will always evolve your technique regardless of what goes on around you with other schools, promotions, people, et cetera."

Wrestling tournaments.

While many UFC fighters were still focused on a single discipline, Hume was engaging in all-time great fights with Eric Paulson and **Pat Miletich**. He also helped end the debate about how a submission fighter would handle a world-class wrestler when he submitted Olympic gold medalist Kenny Monday months before **Frank Shamrock** caught **Kevin Jackson** at UFC Japan.

A severe tear of his Achilles tendon ended Hume's active fighting career, but he remained one of the sport's top trainers. Hume also joined the **Pride** organization in Japan, becoming one of the most powerful and important Americans in the promotion's upper management. Starting as a judge, Hume became the rule director and later the official trainer.

With Pride's demise, Hume has filled a similar role in the new **Dream** promotion in Japan. He also continues to train fighters from all over the world, including UFC standout **Rich Franklin**.

Hunt, Mark

Nickname: The Super Samoan

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 280 lbs

Born: 3/23/74

Debut: Pride Critical Countdown 2004 (6/20/04)

Career Record: 5-6

Notable Wins: Wanderlei Silva (Pride Shockwave 2004); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Shockwave 2005); Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (Pride Total Elimination Absolute)

Notable Losses: Hidehiko Yoshida (Pride Critical Countdown 2004); Josh Barnett (Pride Critical Countdown Absolute); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride Shockwave 2006); Melvin Manhoef (Dynamite!! 2008)

For a moment in time, Mark Hunt looked to be a future world champion. But five consecutive losses have demonstrated just how quickly things can turn. Hunt was a kickboxer who got by on his amazing chin and natural toughness. He was never, frankly, much of a technical fighter. His reputation was built on winning the 2001 K-1 World Grand Prix. Hunt was far from the favorite, but on that single night, the dominos fell in his favor. By beating Jerome LeBanner, Stefan Leko, and Francisco Fihlo in a single night, Hunt laid claim, for at least one year, to being the top kickboxer in the world.

In reality, Hunt was a journeyman contender who had one great night. His overall career kickboxing record was just 30–13. In the months leading up to his glorious achievement he had lost three of four. In Japan, however, winning the K-1 World Grand Prix is monumental, and Hunt was made for life as a main event fighter. When he reverted back to form as a kickboxer, struggling to maintain even a .500 record, his newfound fame offered him a second life in MMA.

His first fight, against judo gold medalist **Hidehiko Yoshida**, came too quickly. He lost early by **arm bar**, but showed enough of a spark in that fight and a subsequent tune up bout with Dan Bobish to be an intriguing prospect. What came next shocked the world. Hunt became the first fighter in almost five years to beat “The Axe Murderer,” **Wanderlei Silva**. Silva had run over everyone he’d faced in **Pride** in 19 fights, but the neophyte Hunt shrugged off his powerful punches and decked him throughout the fight.

When Hunt followed up that upset with a win over fellow K-1 refugee **Mirko Cro Cop**, a title shot seemed imminent. After two more easy wins, Hunt ended up across the ring from former **UFC** champion **Josh Barnett**. Barnett was the worst possible opponent for Hunt: a big, strong grappler who could take advantage of the kickboxer’s weakness on the ground.

Only in Japan would a loss lead directly to a title shot. Hunt did surprisingly well against the world’s best fighter, **Fedor Emelianenko**, and despite two losses in a row, his status as a future star seemed secure. Then the losing continued. Hunt lost three in a row, two to fighters almost 100 pounds lighter. None lasted as long as two minutes. As quickly as he burst onto the scene, he became a laughingstock. At 35, a return to form seems unlikely. Now a jour-

neyman in two sports, Hunt is the kickboxing equivalent to “Butterbean” Eric Esch. He once seemed to hold the world in the palm of his hand; now he’s been relegated to freak shows and spectacles.



IFL: see **International Fight League**

Imanari, Masakazu

Nickname: Ashikan Judan

Height: 5'5"

Weight: 143 lbs

Born: 2/10/76

Debut: Premium Challenge (5/6/02)

Career Record: 19-7-1

Notable Wins: Jorge Gurgel (ZST: Grand Prix Opening Round); Mike Brown (Deep 22nd Impact); Yoshiro Maeda (Deep 22nd Impact)

Notable Losses: Dokonjonosuke Mishima (Deep 11th Impact, Deep 35th Impact); Joachim Hansen (Pride Bushido 8)

No fighter is more closely associated with a single class of techniques than Masakazu Imanari is with **leg locks**. He is without question the most dangerous leg lock man in the entire sport, once stopping both **Mike Brown** and Yoshiro Maeda in the same night — the former with a **heel hook**, the latter with a toe hold — to become the **Deep** featherweight champion. If you've ever wondered why the use of leg locks is restricted in most prominent grappling arts and even some MMA organizations, look no further than the notorious flying heel hook that finished Brown, the one of that left him screaming with a thoroughly dislocated knee in one of the grossest in-ring injuries you're ever going to see. Lest you think the "Ashikan Judan" (literally "tenth-degree master of leg locks") is completely one-dimensional, it should be noted that he mixes in the occasional **arm bar** — none more impressive than the flying entry with which he finished a baffled Robbie Oliver only 27 seconds into the first round. Although Imanari hasn't enjoyed the same level of success as his high-profile teammate **Shinya Aoki** — his striking is nothing to write home about, and he can be controlled on the ground by grapplers with strong top games — there are few who want anything to do with the man once he gets in position to employ his favorite techniques. The mind boggles at the thought of Imanari in early **Pancrase**, where stylish boots were mandatory and leg locks were plentiful.

Inoki, Antonio

The most interesting thing about Antonio Inoki's prototypical MMA fight with **boxing** legend Muhammad Ali is that it was never intended to be a legitimate contest. Ali, a long-time **professional wrestling** fan, was supposed to have a plain old wrestling match with Inoki. Inoki would be beaten up throughout, cut his forehead to draw blood, and collapse into the corner. Ali would encourage the referee to stop the fight. As he turned to insist the fight should be called, Inoki would "Pearl Harbor" him by kicking him in the back of the head. Ali would lose, but it would be obvious he was the better man. He would collect \$6 million and Inoki would go on to worldwide wrestling fame.

It didn't quite work out that way. Somewhere along the way, some of Ali's advisors convinced him that going through with the fake match would soil his legacy. Just days before the fight, Ali insisted it would have to be a real fight. There were no mixed martial arts. No one in either camp knew exactly what to expect or how to legislate a match like this. The rules were in a constant state of flux right up until the evening of the fight.

The eventual rules of the bout overwhelmingly favored Ali. He had all of the power in the negotiations. The Japanese had so much invested in the show that they capitulated to all of Ali's demands. No takedowns were allowed below the waist. No back suplexes were permitted because they had seen Inoki use the move in professional wrestling bouts. Inoki was not allowed to throw a punch with his bare-knuckled fist, nor throw kicks to the head or body. If he secured a takedown with an upper body throw, strikes on the ground were illegal. Essentially, Inoki was nearly helpless. Faced with the fight of his life, a battle with the best heavyweight boxer of all-time, he had a single weapon: the leg kick.

Over 15 long rounds, Inoki used his one weapon over and over again. He brutalized Ali's left leg, fighting from his back and chasing Ali around the ring like a crab. Although fans at the time blamed Inoki for not standing and trading like a real man, in truth the heavyweight champion of the world was helpless to prevent this continued assault. The official decision was a draw, but in retrospect, Inoki clearly won an easy decision. Ali landed just five punches in 45 minutes of fighting. Inoki landed more than 50 leg kicks, dropping Ali several times and sending him to the hospital.

What started as a fun show designed to help both men turned into a disaster for both. Ali was never the same. Many of his trainers blamed the leg kicks for hobbling him for the remaining fights of his career. Inoki, intended to become a worldwide star, was a laughingstock in the United States and a huge disappointment to his fans in Japan.

A genius promoter, Inoki was able to turn this to his advantage. He took on all comers from a variety of martial arts disciplines. Full contact karateka Everett Eddy, Kyokushin karateka Willie Williams, boxer Chuck Wepner, and wrestler Akum Pelwan all fell to his hand. In 1978, Inoki was declared the World Martial Arts Champion. Inoki's emphasis on the martial arts and legitimate holds like the **arm bar** influenced a whole generation of young wrestlers. They grew up idolizing Inoki and all he had done in the 1970s to legitimize wrestling as the strongest martial art. When they came of age, these burgeoning stars like **Akira Maeda** took Inoki's style to a whole new level of realism with the creation of the UWF. Then Inoki protégé **Masakatsu Funaki** blew things wide open by founding **Pancrase**, professional wrestling that was (for the most part) not predetermined.

As Pancrase gave way to **Pride** and MMA surpassed pro wrestling in popularity in Japan, Inoki's Ali debacle was reinvented. Instead of being a complete disaster, Inoki was now looked on as a man ahead of his time. Trying to capitalize on MMA's emergence, Inoki sent many of his star wrestlers to compete in real fights, while at the same time making sure the wrestlers he devoted the most promotional energy to were also adequate fighters.

The strategy was catastrophic. The professional wrestlers were typically embarrassed in real fights, while the shooters he brought in to headline the wrestling shows lacked the charisma or presence to adequately entertain pro wrestling's demanding fans. Wrestling hit an all-time low in Japan. Unlike Inoki, it hasn't been able to recover from its ruinous first foray into MMA.



Inoue, Enson

Nickname: Yamato Damashi

Weight: 215 lbs

Debut: Shooto: Vale Tudo Access 3 (1/21/95)

Notable Win: Randy Couture (Vale Tudo Japan 98)

Height: 5'10"

Born: 4/15/67

Career Record: 12-8

Notable Losses: Frank Shamrock (Vale Tudo Japan 97); Mark Kerr (Pride Grand Prix 2000); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 10); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride 19)

Sitting around a table with members of the Japanese mafia, smoking, joking, and drinking, Enson Inoue commands respect. Although he was born in Hawaii, Inoue is Japanese to the core. Japan's criminal class, men who respect traditional warrior values, seem to hold Inoue in high esteem despite his status as a foreigner. That's because Inoue lives by a code as old as the island nation he has adopted as his home: "Yamato Damashi."

It means no fear. It means never giving up. It's the spirit of the samurai. And Inoue personifies it. It's a code that demands courage beyond reason. Inoue fights for more than just money or glory. He fights to test himself, to see if he really has the spirit inside of him to look death in the eye and still come forward. It's a pursuit of perfection and Inoue has come closer than anyone else in MMA history to living up to those high standards.

Of course, fighting to test your manhood isn't the best way to pad a record and may not be the best strategy for long-term success as a professional fighter. Inoue battled the best on their terms, going to toe-to-toe with feared striker **Igor Vovchanchyn** and refusing to quit while taking a horrendous beating from wrestler **Mark Kerr**. All told, Inoue fought many of the top athletes of his era. He gave his all, but with the lone exception of an **arm bar** win over **Randy Couture**, always came out on the losing end of things.

For new fans, he's nearly forgotten, a man with an unimpressive 11-8 record, a mere footnote in the career of Randy Couture or that guy from David Mamet's *Redbelt*. For anyone who saw him fight in his prime, he's a legend, a transcendent warrior whose courage will stand in their memory for years to come.

In Their Own Words: Enson Inoue on why he fights

"You know, for me, winning and losing isn't about the W or the L. You can win a fight and not learn anything and get nothing from the fight. Like when I fought Igor [Vovchanchyn], I lost the battle but I won because I learned so much about myself in that fight. If I had opened his cut and I hit him again and I won the fight, I would have won . . . record-wise, but as far as for me as a person, I wouldn't have won what I won that night. As far as the experience of seeing what was inside me."

Interview by Tom Hackett, Total-MMA.com



International Fight League

While many competitors tried to copy the successful tactics of the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, the International Fight League took an entirely different approach in 2006. Founded by real estate mogul Kurt Otto and *Wizard* magazine creator Gareb Shamus, the promotion had major plans to shake up the entire industry.

Everything was different in the IFL. For starters, it was a team sport. Organized into teams divided by city (later by MMA camps) the events were designed like a college **wrestling** meet. Each team, coached by MMA legends like **Ken Shamrock** and **Pat Miletich**, fielded squads of five fighters from five weight classes. The winner was the first squad with three victories.

The financial approach was also markedly different. The IFL offered fighters a regular salary, including health benefits. Used to the boom and bust cycle of the typical pro fighter, living large immediately after a fight but struggling after a couple of months with no cash coming in, many competitors enjoyed the new stability.

Otto and Shamus did well selling the IFL to sponsors, investors, and television networks — everyone but the fans. After surviving a UFC lawsuit, it turned out that the IFL's biggest problem was an inability to connect with

their audience. It was the first time that UFC owner Lorenzo **Fertitta**'s words seemed prophetic. There wasn't an MMA boom. There was a UFC boom.

Despite television deals with Fox Sports and MyNetwork TV, the league struggled to survive. They raised \$24 million with a public offering, but with an average cost of \$1.2 million per show (and a television contract paying only \$50,000 per show) the promotion wasn't long for this world. After losing \$21.7 million in 2007, the company went under in 2008.

■ IFL Team Champions

2006 (Season 1): Quad City Silverbacks (Coach Pat Miletich)

2006 (Season 2): Quad City Silverbacks (Coach Pat Miletich)

2007: New York Pit Bulls (Coach **Renzo Gracie**)

International Vale Tudo Championship

In 1993, martial arts fans were shocked at the blood and brutality of the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**. By 1997, though, the UFC seemed downright tame compared to the newly formed IVC. The IVC was not "mixed martial arts." It was unabashed no-holds-barred Brazilian **Vale Tudo** and proud of it. Almost anything was allowed: head butts, elbows, stomps on the ground, knees to the head on the ground, and bare-knuckle **boxing** were all within the rules.

The IVC's promoter was Sergio Batarelli, no stranger to the world of Vale Tudo. Batarelli had studied kung fu and later helped bring full contact **karate** to Brazil. He had even stepped in the ring against Vale Tudo legend Zulu. Batarelli was helping promote Frederico Lapenda's World Vale Tudo Championship when the two had a disagreement. Soon after, Batarelli was gone from the WVC and the IVC was formed.

The fights were outrageously violent. Although many critics found the UFC's Octagon uncouth, these contests in a ring were as gruesome as anything fans had ever seen. Between the bottom rope and the middle ring rope there was canvas netting surrounding the entire ring. When a fighter got taken down in the ropes he often found himself trapped in the net, helpless against the head butts and elbows that were soon to follow.

The first event featured UFC icons **Gary Goodridge** and **Dan Severn**. Goodridge took full advantage of the looser rule set to attack his opponent Pedro Otavio's groin with his feet, putting his toes inside Otavio's trunks and applying an unusual submission attempt. Goodridge one-upped **Keith Hackney**'s brutal testicular assault and took home a win.

Some of the sport's legendary figures made their name in the ring of the IVC. "The Iceman" **Chuck Liddell** traveled to São Paulo to test himself against

the best, defeating the smaller Jose “Pele” Landi-Johns over 30 grueling minutes. On the same show (IVC 6), future Liddell opponent **Wanderlei Silva** announced his presence to the world, decimating top wrestler Mike Van Arsdale in just four minutes. While Van Arsdale would later complain that Silva was greased up like a pig and hard to takedown because of it, the win established Silva as a force to be reckoned with in MMA. His next fight would be in the UFC Octagon against fellow phenom **Vitor Belfort**.

Eventually the propensity for spontaneous violence and the inability of Brazilian martial artists to separate the personal from the professional led to the ban of MMA in São Paulo, Brazil. São Paulo is Brazil’s largest city and one of the most populous urban areas in the entire world. For the IVC, this was the end of the line. Batarelli tried three shows outside Brazil, in Venezuela, Yugoslavia, and Portugal, but they weren’t able to draw as well as he hoped. The IVC wasn’t able to compete for the top talent anymore. With most Brazilian and American stars taking bigger money deals with **Pride** in Japan, Batarelli called it quits.



Jackson, Greg

Camp Name: Jackson's MMA

Significant Fighters: Diego Sanchez, Rashad Evans, Georges St. Pierre, Keith Jardine, Joey Villesenor, Nathan Marquardt

No one has benefited more from *The Ultimate Fighter* reality television show than New Mexico-based trainer Greg Jackson. Two of Jackson's students, **Diego Sanchez** and **Rashad Evans**, won the grand prize in the show's first two seasons. This opened up better and more high profile fight cards for Jackson's students.

Before Sanchez, Jackson had coached fighters mostly on local and regional shows. After the show, he was responsible for preparing his fighters for the sport's elite. Jackson proved up to the task. He was able to find a way to motivate the fighters who migrated to his gym. His fighters would never lose a fight because they were out of shape, and he prided himself in never being out-thought by a competing trainer. He led both Evans and **Keith Jardine** to wins over legendary light heavyweight **Chuck Liddell**. With Jackson in his corner, welterweight star **Georges St. Pierre** was able to conquer the formidable **Matt Hughes**.

New Mexico now hosts a bevy of the world's best fighters, and with Jackson leading the training, that looks to be true for a long time. What makes Jackson's gym special is the sense of family there. Many fighters train together for fights, but they aren't a family. There is always a fear that they might eventually have to fight their training partners. They hold back their best.

It's different with Greg Jackson. None of his fighters will fight each other. Period. This has created tension between Jackson fighters and **Dana White** when White suggested a Jardine/Evans matchup. The fighters refused to do it. That kind of fight would fracture the trust and camaraderie Jackson has worked so hard to create.

In Their Own Words: Greg Jackson on the legends of the sport

"A fighter is a fighter to me. I'm never a fan of these guys. That doesn't mean I don't respect them; I think they're amazing athletes. But I'm never like, 'Wow, this is a legendary fighter.' All they are is math problems in front of me. If it's Chuck Liddell or it's Joe Six-Pack, it's all the same to me. It's a problem in front of me and I've got to figure out the best way to get around that.

"These legendary fighters are amazing, but everybody, even my guys, has holes in their games. It's just a matter of identifying comfort zones and taking them out of them and understanding the angles and the psychology of your fighters. Getting a good game plan early so it becomes second nature to them. All of these are variables that you can control. I'm never worried that that's Chuck Liddell in the opposite corner. I'm thinking, 'This guy's an amazing striker, he's got good this and good that' and I've got to make sure we get around it.

"That's where their teammates come in, because they're really competitive guys. Their teammates will really push them. Instead of sitting back on their laurels, a guy like Georges St. Pierre comes down and they train and their teammates can really push them. Hold them down, tap them out, rock them with punches, or whatever it takes. The team is a real key element at that point, because you're able to say, 'You're this great guy but so-and-so just whacked you in the head. You can't have that happening and it's because you're doing this or that.' I just try to keep them improving, keep them focused on constantly getting better, constantly looking for a new challenge. Even if it's outside the cage. Trying to keep them interested – that's my job."

Jackson, Quinton

Nickname: Rampage

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 6/20/78

Debut: International Sport Combat Federation: Memphis (11/13/99)

Career Record: 30-8

Notable Wins: Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 22); Kevin Randleman (Pride 25); Murilo Bustamante (Pride Total Elimination 2003); Chuck Liddell (Pride Final Conflict 2003, UFC 71); Ricardo Arona (Pride Critical Countdown 2004); Matt Lindland (World Fighting Alliance: King of the Streets); Dan Henderson (UFC 75); Wanderlei Silva (UFC 92)

Notable Losses: Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 15); Wanderlei Silva (Pride Final Conflict 2003, Pride 28); Mauricio Rua (Pride Total Elimination 2005); Forrest Griffin (UFC 86); Rashad Evans (UFC 114)



Quinton “Rampage” Jackson is a character — one of the sport’s most colorful ones. With his howling ring entrances, trademark chain, and overall showman’s flair, you could be forgiven for mistaking Rampage for a **professional wrestling** character, and a pretty good one. He’s funny, engaging, and charismatic. But Jackson’s controversial shtick — heavy on racial humor, sometimes at the expense of other black men — has been derided by up-and-comer **Mo Lawal** as “a minstrel show,” and there have been more than a few episodes of bizarre behavior and the occasional run-in with the law. There’s often more than enough going on in Jackson’s life to make his in-ring accomplishments seem secondary. But once the bell rings, there’s no mistaking Quinton Jackson for anything but a first-rate competitor, and one of the top light heavyweights in the world.

An All-State wrestler at Ralley-Egypt High School in Memphis, Tennessee, Jackson broke into mixed martial arts in the Gladiator Challenge and King of the Cage promotions, where his propensity for the big slam and the exciting finish brought him to the attention of **Pride** officials. Given the Japanese public’s strange relationship with black athletes — look no further than **Kevin Randleman**’s “Ultimate Donkey Kong” entrance, or **Bob Sapp** mashing bananas into his mouth while mimicking a gorilla — who knows what Pride had in

mind when they brought Jackson in to face their number one native draw, **Kazushi Sakuraba**. One thing is for certain, however: they didn't want him to win. "They told me, 'If you win this fight, you get \$10,000,'" Jackson revealed to *MMA Today* years later. "I don't know if the president of Pride knew about it, but they told me, 'If you lose by knockout or submission, but don't tap, you get \$12,000.'" Jackson tossed Sakuraba around the ring in spectacular fashion before being caught in a **rear naked choke** by the great submission fighter. To Jackson's credit, he tapped — for the first time in his career, and also the last.

After rattling off seven wins in his next eight fights, including victories over Kevin Randleman and the once-mighty **Igor Vovchanchyn** (the only bump along the road was a richly deserved DQ loss for kneeing **Daijiro Matsui** *unbelievably* squarely in the groin), Jackson was awarded a berth in Pride's stacked 2003 middleweight Grand Prix. Jackson squeaked by the hard-luck **Murilo Bustamante** to earn his way into the final four, where, remarkably, he faced **Chuck Liddell** and **Wanderlei Silva** in the same night. Jackson dominated Liddell, proving himself both the better striker and the superior grappler, pounding on The Iceman until his corner wisely decided to throw in the towel. As much as any other single fight, Jackson's one-sided drubbing of one of the **UFC's** best helped perpetuate the notion that Pride was home to the top light heavy-weights in the world. It was never as simple as that, and the caveat that styles make fights most definitely applies, but seeing the ease with which Jackson overwhelmed Liddell, and then watching Silva destroy Jackson with knees from the **clinch** later that night, it's understandable that many would come to that conclusion.

Silva had Jackson's number. After Jackson rebounded from his tournament loss with wins over crowd-pleaser **Ikuhisa Minowa** and **Brazilian Top Team** standout **Ricardo Arona** — the former by way of a solid knee, the latter with a dramatic power-bomb knockout slam that *may* have included an illegal head butt — he faced Silva again, this time with the Pride middleweight (205 pounds) title on the line. The result was the same: Silva ruined Jackson's night with knees from the **Muay Thai** clinch. Jackson fared no better against **Mauricio Rua**, Silva's **Chute Boxe** teammate, who stopped him with a punishing barrage of soccer kicks. Again, styles make fights, and Jackson had no answer to Chute Boxe's all-out brawling Muay Thai.

It was around this time that the fairly un-Christian Jackson was "born again," renewing his faith after both he and his son awoke from eerily similar nightmares. His newfound religious conviction had a direct impact on his in-ring performance at least once: with less than a week to go before the sec-

ond Silva fight, Jackson decided to fast for three days to help “fend off the devil.” No wonder, then, that he seemed to tire so early, to have so little in reserve. Some also perceived less aggression, less of an edge in the reborn fighter.

In May 2006, Jackson left Pride for the **World Fighting Alliance**, an on-again-off-again promotion that took one shot at the big time with its King of the Streets card. Jackson squared off against high-profile middleweight **Matt Lindland** in the main event, and earned a split decision win in a fight that could easily have gone either way. When the WFA folded, the UFC scooped up the contracts of both Jackson and **Lyoto Machida** in a move that would have lasting effects on the light heavyweight division.

After avenging an early career loss against Marvin Eastman in his UFC debut, Jackson was offered a title shot against Liddell, who was undefeated in the three and a half years since they’d last met. Jackson, who had tightened up his **boxing** considerably under the tutelage of trainer Juanito Ibarra, countered a terribly sloppy left to the body with a tight right hook that put the champion on the mat less than two minutes into the first round. Soon thereafter, Jackson unified the UFC light heavyweight and Pride middleweight titles by besting **Dan Henderson** in a brilliant bout that went the full five. The newly unified title wouldn’t be defended for almost ten months, however, as Jackson accepted a coaching role on ***The Ultimate Fighter*** to build towards **Forrest Griffin**’s title challenge.

At times in the Griffin bout, especially in the first round, Jackson looked like he was clearly the better fighter. At others, he looked oddly hesitant. Jackson took the loss by unanimous decision in a fight many thought he won. And then he freaked out completely. After four sleepless nights — and *again* with the fasting — Jackson was in and out of a mental institution for observation. He was also charged with two felonies and three misdemeanors after bombing around careening into cars in the camo Ford F-350 he had had custom painted with his likeness. It was a rough week. One of the victims whose car was struck was a pregnant woman whose baby was later stillborn. Predictably, a civil suit followed.

The UFC stood by their fighter throughout this ordeal, and through the subsequent embarrassment of Jackson sexually harassing a female reporter on camera. After a bad break with Ibarra, Rampage began to train at London’s Wolfslair gym, and the change of scenery seemed to help him straighten himself out. Jackson finally earned a win over Wanderlei Silva — third time’s a charm — stopping him in the first round of their UFC 92 meeting, and he followed that effort with a decision win in a tough, competitive fight against **Keith Jardine**. He took another coaching assignment on *The Ultimate Fighter*,

building towards a hometown battle against **Rashad Evans**. He even landed a potential career-making acting role, cast as B.A. Baracus in the *A-Team* remake. Everything seemed to be going his way.

But a falling out with **Dana White** led to Jackson's abrupt announcement of his retirement in the fall of 2009, citing White's open mockery of his acting ambitions, the UFC's failure to promote him as a unified world champion following the Henderson fight, and a handful of other accumulated slights. While few believed this retirement would prove permanent, Jackson's move changed the landscape of the light heavyweight division considerably — until, that is, Jackson returned to the sport in May of 2010, dropping a hard-fought unanimous decision to Rashad Evans in their much-anticipated bout. It was a solid effort from a man who hadn't fought in over a year, but only time will tell whether Jackson's future lies in the cage or on the silver screen.

Jardine, Keith

Nickname: The Dean of Mean

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 10/31/75

Debut: Gladiator Challenge 5 (8/19/01)

Career Record: 15-8-1

Notable Wins: Forrest Griffin (UFC 66); Chuck Liddell (UFC 76); Brandon Vera (UFC 89)

Notable Losses: Rashad Evans (*The Ultimate Fighter 2*); Stephan Bonnar (*Ultimate Fight Night 2*); Wanderlei Silva (UFC 84); Quinton Jackson (UFC 96); Thiago Silva (UFC 102)

Keith Jardine is at heart a man of the coffeehouse: an avid reader and independent cinema enthusiast. He's also a former bounty hunter who bombs around Albuquerque in a sweet-ass 1996 Ford Bronco. No one thing defines him.

A key member of **Greg Jackson's** team, Jardine inserted himself into the UFC's light heavyweight title picture with an upset win over **Chuck Liddell** in The Iceman's first fight after dropping the belt to **Quinton Jackson**. Jardine controlled the pace of the fight from start to finish, picking the former champ apart with kicks en route to a split decision victory. It was, and remains, the finest performance of Jardine's UFC career, a career that began two years earlier with a decision loss to future Jackson's Submission Fighting teammate **Rashad Evans** on the second season of *The Ultimate Fighter*. Jardine rebounded from that disappointing debut with five solid performances in the Octagon, collecting four wins — including a career-making KO of **Forrest Griffin** — against only one loss, a controversial decision against *TUF 1* runner-up **Stephan Bonnar**.

A stunning first round — indeed, first minute — loss to the unheralded and ultimately unsuccessful Houston Alexander caused Jardine's stock to drop significantly, which is what made his fine showing against Liddell in his next bout all the more surprising. He was supposed to be a relatively easy win for Liddell, allowing the former champ to get back on track. Jardine, of course, had other ideas. But he hasn't fared well in the upper echelons of the light heavyweight division since, dropping three of four fights. While there's obviously no shame in going the distance in a losing effort against Quinton Jackson, or in getting caught early by the still terrifying **Wanderlei Silva**, it's increasingly clear that Jardine has found his level: as a gatekeeper, not a legitimate title threat.



Jennum, Steve

Height: 5'10"

Born: 1961

Career Record: 2-3

Notable Losses: Tank Abbott (Ultimate Ultimate 95); Marco Ruas (World Vale Tudo Championships 1)

Weight: 210 lbs

Debut: UFC 3 (9/9/94)

Notable Win: Harold Howard (UFC 3)

Like a good ninja (he was an instructor for Robert Bussey's Warrior International), Jennum appeared out of nowhere at **UFC 3** to win the \$60,000 in prize money. Jennum had a significant advantage: unlike past winners, he didn't have to win several fights to claim the title of "Ultimate Fighter." It was a tournament filled with injuries and bizarre behavior. Both favorites, **Ken Shamrock** and **Royce Gracie**, withdrew due to injuries. Gracie's decision to quit came only after he marched down to the cage with his entire entourage, only

to throw in the towel against Canadian **Harold Howard**. Gracie's exit from the competition enraged and discouraged Shamrock, who had focused obsessively on the Brazilian champion since being choked out at UFC 1.

Shamrock's decision not to fight Howard opened the door for Jennum, a Nebraskan policeman, to essentially steal the title. Howard disrespected him by starting the fight with a dismissive front flip. Jennum made him pay by mounting him and punching him until not one but two towels came flying into the cage to signal Howard's surrender.

Jennum's win changed the way the UFC's tournaments would work going forward. From then on, an alternate would have to earn his place in the tournament by winning a fight. This would place him on equal ground with fighters in the main draw. No one would go in, as Jennum had, completely fresh. New rules in place, Jennum returned for UFC 4 and beat the second prominent boxer to try his hand at the UFC, former IBF champion Melton Bowen. After taking some hard punches, the Nebraskan ninja took the boxer down and submitted him with an **arm bar**. Unfortunately, the champion broke his hand in the scuffle and was, somewhat ironically, replaced by an alternate.

Jennum was a tough guy, a cop who later fended off multiple attackers in a robbery attempt. But he wasn't an elite fighter. Against stiffer competition, like **Tank Abbott**, **Marco Ruas**, and **Lion's Den** student Jason Godsey, Jennum wasn't up to the challenge. His name is in the history books, but it is a hollow achievement. Jennum may have been crowned the UFC 3 tournament champion, but the best fighters that night were backstage nursing their wounds, not in the cage.

Jewels: see **Smackgirl**

Johnson, Anthony

Nickname: Rumble

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 3/6/84

Debut: PF 2 (8/16/06)

Career Record: 8-3

Notable Wins: Kevin Burns (*The Ultimate Fighter* 8 Finale); Yoshiyuki Yoshida (UFC 104)

Notable Losses: Rich Clementi (UFC 76); Kevin Burns (UFC Fight Night 14); Josh Koscheck (UFC 106)

For such a soft-spoken and unassuming guy, Anthony Johnson's **UFC** fights sure seem to be awfully controversial and chaotic. First there was his fight with Kevin Burns on Spike TV. Johnson was poked in the eye repeatedly, but when controversial referee **Steve Mazzagatti** finally stepped in to stop the car-

nage, it wasn't to disqualify the dastardly Burns (who UFC announcers **Joe Rogan** and **Mike Goldberg** insisted wasn't gouging John intentionally, despite repeated evidence to the contrary): it was to award him the fight when Johnson couldn't continue. Johnson avenged the loss with a tremendous head kick in his next fight and, despite the setback, seemed on his way to being a force in the division.

Johnson was an enormous welterweight. After making an extreme weight cut down to 170 pounds, he would spring back up overnight, entering the cage at nearly 200 pounds. It was a dangerous game, and against **Yoshiyuki Yoshida** at UFC 104, it cost him dearly. Johnson missed the 170-pound limit by a whole six pounds. He forfeited 20 percent of his purse to Yoshida, and after knocking him out with a booming right hand, had to forfeit a \$60,000 Knockout of the Night bonus as well.

It was a stiff financial lesson for Johnson who has two choices: either make weight, every time, or move up a class. He still has potential to be a world

In Their Own Words: Anthony Johnson on missing weight

"I was working with this trainer, a friend of my agent. He wanted me to try barely eating anything but getting a lot of fluids in me. So we did that, and I was 192 on Monday and I should have been less than 185 on Wednesday, and I wouldn't need to make the hard cut on Friday. The trainer told me, 'Drink a lot of water and don't eat too much.' So I did that, and then on Thursday I did a three-hour workout and dropped from 198 to 183. I was 192, and I drank all of this water that he wanted me to drink and got back up to 198. Doing his thing – it was cool but I think the process got started too late. If I'd done things the way I always did, I would have been fine, but trying this new method, this new way of doing things, really jacked my body up.

"You know, I haven't missed weight in two years. I always try my best, and when I don't succeed, it irritates me and I get bummed out. It pisses me off, it pisses off the UFC, and it pisses off my fans. It makes everybody mad, you know?

"After this, though, I told my coaches, my agent, everybody that hangs out with me or that will ever be in my corner that we all have to sit down and get everything situated. Because I can't be losing weight like that. And the type of training I did for this fight, certain things weren't right, some things were. But we have to get everything in order, you know? I can't have that, especially when we are trying to make a run for the title. I want everything organized and complete."

Interview by Jeremy Botter for Heavy.com

champion, but the title he wins may end up being in the middleweight, and not the welterweight, weight class.

Johnston, Brian

Nickname: Fury

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 225 lbs

Born: 1/1/70

Debut: UFC 10 (7/12/96)

Career Record: 5-5

Notable Losses: Don Frye (UFC 10); Mark Coleman (UFC 11); Ken Shamrock (Ultimate Ultimate 96)

For **SEG's UFC**, the key to success was finding stars. They had eschewed selling sport; instead they were selling personalities. Brian Johnston seemed like the perfect find. He was young, ripped, and good-looking. He even displayed his patriotism right on his American flag Speedos. Unfortunately, he just wasn't a very good fighter. He lost to **Don Frye** at UFC 10, **Mark Coleman** at UFC 11, and **Ken Shamrock** at Ultimate Ultimate 96. It was a who's who of MMA at the time and clearly demonstrated that Johnston didn't belong at the top of the sport.

Johnston was smart, though. When Frye jumped to New Japan Pro Wrestling in search of greener pastures, Johnston jumped with him. Although he was never a great pro wrestler, Johnston found his niche training the Japanese wrestlers for MMA fights. **Antonio Inoki** was busy pushing the fighters into real contests and there was no shortage of business coming Johnston's way.

Then, in August 2001, tragedy struck. Johnston was simply grabbed in a neck crank in training. This had happened thousands of times before, but this time it went tragically awry. Johnston popped a blood vessel in his neck and suffered a stroke. He almost died and could communicate only by blinking his eyes. Eventually, to the surprise of his doctors, Johnston not only lived but was able to walk again.

Jones, Jon

Nickname: Bones

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 7/19/87

Debut: 4/12/08

Career Record: 10-1

Notable Wins: Stephan Bonnar (UFC 94); Brandon Vera (UFC Live: Vera vs. Jones)

Notable Losses: Matt Hamill (*The Ultimate Fighter* Finale 10)

When his legacy is written years from now, Jones may be labeled the **UFC's** first fighter from the digital age. For Jones, the internet isn't just a source of

entertainment and information — it's a bona fide training tool. Before he made the move to **Greg Jackson's** all-star camp in New Mexico, much of Jones's training came from watching YouTube videos and endlessly perfecting the techniques he saw there. And not just the conventional ones. Jones believes any technique can work effectively, as long as the fighter drills it endlessly and believes in it completely.

The result of this belief is a hodgepodge of weird moves and throws that makes Jones stand out even in the diverse world of professional MMA. He's borrowed striking from video game characters, throws from professional wrestlers, and taught himself **judo** by watching YouTube videos. His signature move is a lightning-fast spinning elbowsmash — a clubbing blow he has used effectively against multiple foes. So far, the unpredictable Jones has been a mystery opponents have had no answer for. His only loss was by way of disqualification in a fight he was dominating against wrestler **Matt Hamill**. After stunning Hamill with a takedown, Jones dropped elbow after elbow, wrecking his opponent's face. Unfortunately, they were illegal "12-6" downward elbows, moves banned in a simpler time when scared politicians believed the tip of the elbow was somehow more dangerous coming directly up and down.

Jones rebounded nicely with a win over failed prospect **Brandon Vera** and seems on his way to becoming a future champion. But the fight with Vera could be seen as an object lesson for Jones. Vera himself was once seen as similarly destined for greatness. For Jones to continue on a path to the top he can't be content to stay static. But if past is prelude, Jones is probably on the internet right now, finding the next wild and weird move to spring on an unsuspecting opponent.

Judo

When Jigoro Kano synthesized the teachings of Kitōryū and Tenjin Shin'yōryū jiu-jitsu, and further expanded their syllabi by incorporating new techniques guided by the principle of maximum efficiency, he called his new art judo rather than jiu-jitsu. "Ju" — gentleness, flexibility, yielding — remained, but the shift from "jitsu" (technique) to "do" (way) was significant, signaling a movement away from the pure battlefield utility of the techniques inherited from the samurai past and towards a training method that encouraged personal growth and moral development. The martial element remained vital — without it, Kano could not have proven the benefits of his Kodokan (literally "a place to study the way") over the competing jiu-jitsu schools of the day — but judo aspired to be more than a martial art: it took as its aim the harmonious development and eventual perfection of human character.

The philosophical underpinnings of judo did not emerge fully formed out of the mind of a mere 22-year-old — Kano’s age at the founding of the Kodokan at Eishoji Temple in 1882. They would take shape over the course of long career in education, one influenced by the philosophical and pedagogic writings of John Dewey, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Jeremy Bentham. But the principles that guided the training methods at the Kodokan — *seiryoku zenyo* (maximum efficiency) and *jita kyoei* (mutual welfare) — had immediate impact. First, Kano’s belief in the maximum efficient use of energy put great emphasis on *kuzushi*, unbalancing the opponent, so that he could be thrown using comparatively little strength. (“To oversimplify it, **wrestling** is pushing, while judo is pulling,” says **Don Frye**, who’s done both.) Second, the principle of mutual welfare and benefit entailed a concern for the safety of your training partner, and a focus on techniques that could be trained safely at full resistance rather than theoretically effective moves that are too potentially injurious to drill meaningfully.

The result of these guiding principles wasn’t only that Kano was turning out better people — he was turning out better fighters. Kano’s judo (sometimes referred to as “Kano Jiu-jitsu” in early texts) proved the victor over rival schools in an 1886 contest sponsored by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, and quickly rose to prominence as Japan’s foremost martial art. Challenges that it won with ease confirmed its training methods; schools that offered greater difficulty were asked to instruct at the Kodokan so that techniques could be further refined. The jiu-jitsu schools of Kano’s youth had risked complete collapse under the weight of their thuggish reputations. By cleaning up jiu-jitsu’s rough image through his Kodokan, Kano ensured that their knowledge accumulated over centuries would not be lost.

The internationalization of judo began in earnest in the earliest years of the 20th century, with instructors fanning out across the globe. Kano, an internationalist, believed the principle of maximum efficient use of physical and mental energy inherent in judo training could benefit people the world over. This spirit of internationalism led not only to the firm establishment of judo throughout the globe — there are 192 member states in the United Nations, and 187 in the International Judo Federation — but also to the development of closely related disciplines. **Mitsuyo Maeda**’s travels took him to Brazil, where a young **Carlos Gracie**, alongside his frail young brother **Helio**, transformed a brief, basic instruction in judo into the now-thriving art of **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** by placing unprecedented emphasis on *ne waza* (ground technique) and constantly testing their art against all comers. The Russian Vasaly Oshchepkov trained in judo as an orphan boy attending Vladivostok’s Tokyo Christian

school and was integral in the development of **sambo** (cambo), a fusion of judo and the folk wrestling traditions of the Soviet lands.

Despite this internationalization, and Kano's standing as the first Asian representative to the International Olympic Committee, judo's founder was surprisingly ambivalent about the sport's inclusion in the Olympic Games. "If it be the desire of other member countries," he wrote in a 1936 letter, "I have no objection. But I do not feel inclined to take any initiative. For one thing, judo in reality is not a mere sport or game. I regard it as a principle of life, art, and science. In fact, it is a means for personal cultural attainment." Writing on the eve of the Berlin Olympics, it's understandable that Kano would worry that "the Olympic Games are so strongly flavored with nationalism that it is possible to be influenced by it and to develop contest judo as a retrograde form, as jiu-jitsu was before the Kodokan was founded."

All the same, Olympic judo has flourished since its inclusion at the 1964 Tokyo Games, and, in an outcome that would perhaps give Kano little comfort, contest judo broadly speaking has produced no small number of professional mixed martial artists. Olympic champion **Hidehiko Yoshida**, Asian Champion **Yoshihiro Akiyama**, former Russian national team member **Fedor Emelianenko**, and American junior champion **Karo Parisyan** have all translated their dynamic throwing skills and strong groundwork into successful MMA careers, exposing new audiences to the techniques and principles of judo. From its humble beginnings with nine students on twelve mats more than a century ago, Jigoro Kano's judo continues to grow, and helps its practitioners do the same.

Just Bleed Guy

If you didn't quite know what to make of **TUF** alumnus "Filthy" Tom Lawlor's strange appearance at the **UFC 100** weigh-in, it's probably because you'd never had the privilege of watching **Mark Kerr**'s 17-second manhandling of Greg "Ranger" Stott way back at **UFC 15**. That match, brief though it was, has become something of a cult classic. There are a number of reasons for this.

First, there's the general goofiness of Greg Stott, who delivered perhaps the finest pre-fight interview in the history of the sport, which we proudly present here in its entirety: "My name's Greg 'Ranger' Stott. I'm a former airborne ranger and combat veteran. Currently I'm a hand-to-hand instructor and a founder of my own style, which we call 'RIP.' RIP stands for Ranger International Performance, and it's the most expeditious and effective form of hand-to-hand combat in the world. That's why the RIP team is here at **UFC 15**: to prove why RIP rules — and all others rest in peace."

Next, there's the fact that Ranger International Performance turned out to be *awful*. Stott managed no more offense than a baffling simultaneous stomp kick/punch combination before being kneed into unconsciousness by a Mark Kerr very much in his drug-fueled, squeaky-voiced prime.

Both of these things were truly wonderful. But the highlight of the bout, for all who saw it then and all who have seen it since, had nothing to do with the action inside the Octagon. No, it was the action in the stands. Specifically, it was a five-second clip of the single greatest fan to ever grace the sport of mixed martial arts: Just Bleed Guy.

For years, little was known about Just Bleed Guy. But this much we could say with certainty: sometime before the Stott/Kerr showdown, he had anointed his forehead with the letters "UFC" in neon green body paint, and, more importantly, the words "JUST BLEED" on his chest in white above a poor but discernible Nike swoosh. He then found his way to Casino Magic Bay in beautiful Bay St. Louis, Missouri. He took his seat, one row in front of and slightly to the right of a bearded man smoking a joint with a fierce lean on. At some point over the course of the evening, Just Bleed Guy purchased or otherwise obtained at least one beer. Then, just as ring announcer **Bruce Buffer** finished his stirring introduction of the proud Grenada veteran Stott, it happened: Just Bleed Guy, shirtless, magnificent, plastic beer cup in hand, scowled and flexed in an angry, unyielding "most muscular" pose. Those of us watching at home didn't really know what we were seeing. But we knew instantly that it was something we'd needed to see all along.

All too soon, it ended. The camera senselessly cut back to the cage. But Just Bleed Guy left his mark in those five short seconds, and over the next decade his legend grew and the mystery deepened. Just who was the man behind the paint? What led him to that singular moment, and what had happened to him since? As with virtually anything actually worth knowing, the answer ultimately came from **The Underground** Forum. In late 2008, poster and professional fighter Joe Nameth (a scrappy 3-20, but currently on a 12-fight slide) offered photographs of and with Just Bleed Guy from a subsequent UFC card in New Orleans. "I have known 'Just Bleed' since we were kids," Nameth revealed. "That's me in the green shirt and hat." Unfortunately, it also turned out that Just Bleed Guy — known to some, including the authorities, as James Ladner — was serving time in a Mississippi prison, convicted on a charge of receiving stolen property, specifically farming equipment. If the world was ever going to see a man stripped to the waist at an MMA event with an all-caps call for blood scrawled on his chest, it looked like it would have to wait until at least 2012.

Enter “Filthy” Tom Lawlor: fighter, showman, genius. Realizing, perhaps, that there could be no greater stage in mixed martial arts than that provided by UFC 100, Lawlor seized the opportunity to bring this unrivaled moment in the history of the sport he loves to the attention of the broadest possible audience. As he approached the scales to weigh in at Mandalay Bay Event Center the day before the event, his forehead (“UFC”) and chest (“JUST BLEED”) screaming out in body paint the two things that most needed to be said, there could be no doubt whose star shone brightest that day. It wasn’t **Brock Lesnar**’s. It certainly wasn’t **Georges St. Pierre**’s. It wasn’t even Tom Lawlor’s. No, that day belonged to one man and one man only. It belonged to James Ladner. It belonged to Just Bleed Guy.



Kang, Denis

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 9/17/77

Debut: Ultimate Warrior Challenge 1 (8/2/98)

Career Record: 32-12-1 (2 No Contests)

Notable Wins: Murilo Rua (Pride Bushido 11); Amar Suloev (Pride Bushido 12); Akihiro Gono (Pride Bushido 13)

Notable Losses: Kazuo Misaki (Pride Bushido 13); Yoshihiro Akiyama (Hero's 2007 in Korea); Gegard Mousasi (Dream 2); Alan Belcher (UFC 93)

Depending on where he's fighting, Denis Kang is introduced to the crowd as either Korean or Canadian. That might seem slightly confusing, but it's actually the simple version: raised in Vancouver, Kang was born to Korean and French parents in the tiny French colony of St. Pierre and Miquelon, off the coast of Newfoundland. After an indifferent beginning in a collection of minor North American promotions and a brief, unsuccessful run in **Pancrase**, Kang's career came to life in Seoul's Spirit MC, where his heavy hands and dynamic, explosive style made him a crowd favorite.

His success in Korea earned him a spot in **Pride's** Bushido series, and a berth in the 2006 Bushido welterweight (185 pounds) tournament. After convincing wins over **Murilo Rua**, Amar Suloev, and **Akihiro Gono**, Kang dropped a closely contested final by split decision to **Kazuo Misaki**. Kang was impressive in defeat, battling through a torn biceps muscle, and competing not long after the death of his longtime girlfriend and fellow **American Top Team** member Shelby Walker, who took her own life in the fall of 2006.

Kang was undefeated in 23 fights prior to the Misaki loss, but since, he hasn't looked the same. First came a surprising knockout loss to **Yoshihiro Akiyama**, a top competitor at 185 pounds, but not a fighter known for his hands. Then there was the baffling submission loss to **Gegard Mousasi**, in which Kang — a Marcus Soares black belt in **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** — fell into an easy **triangle choke**. Another loss, this time by **guillotine choke** to Alan Belcher in Kang's

UFC debut, created further doubts still. Once considered among the world's top middleweights, Denis Kang is no longer part of that discussion.

Karate

Before there were MMA schools on every corner in America, there were karate dojos. Plenty of them. Karate came back west with American soldiers after World War II and became a favorite after-school activity and babysitter for American suburban kids across the country. Along the way karate, once designed to allow samurai to kill with their bare hands in Okinawa, lost its edge.

By the time the **Ultimate Fighting Championship** was created in 1993, a karate master was ill equipped to fight a martial artist with skills grounded in reality combat like **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu's Royce Gracie**. Karate and other traditional martial arts became laughingstocks in the mixed martial arts community.

Some successful fighters came from a karate background, including **Bas Rutten**, **Georges St. Pierre**, and the late K-1 standout Andy Hug. These fighters may have come from a karate background, but by the time they were finished products, you could barely see the karate base beneath the submission grappling and kickboxing techniques. It wasn't until **Lyoto Machida** won the UFC light heavyweight title that karate began to fulfill its promise as a legitimate fighting style.

Like Rutten and St. Pierre, Machida had to learn Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, Thai boxing, and **wrestling** to be successful. But unlike the other two karateka who went on to MMA glory, karate remains Machida's main style. His unusual stance, fluid movement, and pinpoint striking have given opponents fits and brought much pride to an art form that needed a pick-me-up.

■ **Kyokushin versus Shotokan**

Karate is represented in MMA competition by two major styles: Shotokan and Kyokushin. Until recently, Kyokushin karate has been the dominant form of karate seen in MMA cages and kickboxing rings worldwide. That makes sense in light of the mentality of its founder, Masatatsu Oyama. Oyama was a man who enjoyed fighting and violence. Kyokushin instructors helped spread the art around Japan with their fists. Oyama himself would impress crowds wherever he traveled by killing bulls with his bare hands. He was called "God Hand" because on multiple occasions he killed a bull with a single strike.

Oyama's style of karate was hard and aggressive. Fighters suffered grueling physical punishment in training to toughen them up and their fighting approach allowed no step backwards. You can see this mentality in Rutten and St. Pierre, aggressive fighters who were always coming forward. Kyokushin

karate focuses heavily on full contact sparring and fighting. Oyama allowed no protective equipment; his only protection for students was a ban on punches to the face in training.

Shotokan, perhaps reflecting the values of its founder Gichin Funakoshi, took a less outwardly aggressive and reckless approach. Funakoshi was a poet and a scholar, and his style of karate focused on the mental aspect of fighting. He still remembered when karate was a legitimate form of self-defense, designed to evade the long swords of a samurai and strike quickly with a killing blow. Although he didn't advocate sport karate, Funakoshi's Shotokan has developed a point fighting system of karate. Although competitors are often in extensive padding, it remains true to its roots by placing a premium on elusiveness. Some of the ethos of true karate remains, including a "one strike, one kill" mentality. No Shotokan fighter had ever achieved success in MMA until Lyoto Machida used the best of karate to dominate more traditional strikers inside the UFC Octagon.

Kasteel, Joop

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 265 lbs

Born: 8/27/64

Debut: Fight Gala: Mix Fight Night (6/15/96)

Career Record: 19-13

Notable Wins: Roman Zentsov (MilleniumSports: Veni, Vidi, Vici); Dan Severn (Rings Holland: Men of Honor)

Notable Losses: Kiyoshi Tamura (Rings: Rise 5th); Gilbert Yvel (Rings Holland: There Can Only Be One); Cheick Kongo (Rings Holland: World's Greatest)

Early on, the **UFC** was obsessed with finding a marketable fighter. They wanted someone who looked like a fighter people would see on late night television martial arts movies. That desire wasn't limited to American fight promotions. The Japanese were always on the lookout for great-looking guys as well, men to wear what the fighters in Japan called "banana hammocks," the tiny Speedos that helped draw in the female fans.

Pancrase had the **Lion's Den** guys and **Bas Rutten**, but **Rings**, frankly, had too many big, hairy, and ugly foreign fighters. Chris Doleman, **Volk Han**, and Andrei Kopilov were great pioneers of the sport, but not much to look at. Enter Joop Kasteel.

A body builder from the Rhino Gym in Holland, Kasteel had the look that Doleman needed for the Japanese shows. He had almost no fighting experience, but he was big and he was strong. He was also a fast learner, developing the skills he needed to compete with experienced fighters in Japan. He was good enough to earn two title shots in Rings, losing to both **Kiyoshi Tamura** and

Gilbert Yvel. In his final fight, Kasteel earned gold for the first time, beating the ubiquitous **Dan Severn** for a now forgotten European heavyweight title.

Kawajiri, Tatsuya

Nickname: Crusher

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 154 lbs

Born: 5/8/78

Debut: Shooto: R.E.A.D. 4 (4/12/00)

Career Record: 26-6-2

Notable Wins: Yves Edwards (Shooto 2003: 8/10 in Yokohama); Vitor Ribeiro (Shooto 2004 Year-End Show); Joachim Hansen (Shooto: The Victory of the Truth); Gesias Cavalcante (Dream 9)

Notable Losses: Vitor Ribeiro (Shooto 2002: Year-End Show); Takanori Gomi (Pride Bushido 9); Gilbert Malendez (Pride Shockwave 2006); Eddie Alvarez (Dream 5); Shinya Aoki (Dream 15)

If you can remember a time before Tatsuya “Crusher” Kawajiri was undoubtedly among the top lightweight fighters in the world, you’ve been following Japanese MMA for quite a while now. After only two years of martial arts training, Kawajiri made his **Shooto** debut with a quick **rear naked choke** loss in 2000. Immediately thereafter, he began to show the world what he was made of — and it’s tough, tough stuff. His heavy hands, solid **wrestling**, and thunderous **ground and pound** propelled him past a host of young Shooto hopefuls, and serious opposition like **Yves Edwards** and **Vitor “Shaolin” Ribeiro**. Kawajiri claimed Shooto’s welterweight (154 pounds) title when he stopped Ribeiro at the 2004 year-end show, avenging a decision loss two years to the day prior.

When **Pride** scooped up much of Shooto’s top talent for their lightweight-focused Bushido series, Kawajiri met fellow Shooto alumni **Takanori Gomi** in a hotly anticipated match later selected by Pride fans as the best of 2005. Gomi got the better of Kawajiri standing in a wide-open affair, and finished him with a choke after knocking him to the canvas, handing Crusher his first loss in almost three years. It must have been disheartening for the Shooto faithful to see this great bout among two of their top fighters occur under the banner of another promotion, but Kawajiri returned to the Shooto ring to defend his title against **Joachim Hansen** — in a match that ended in eight seconds on a groin kick. If you, like **Joe Rogan**, are strangely fascinated by kicks to the groin, Kawajiri/Hansen is an all-time classic. Anyone else would have been badly disappointed.

Kawajiri has fought only rarely in Shooto since, and now calls **Dream**’s lightweight division home. Although he was upset by **Eddie Alvarez** in the semi-final of the Dream Lightweight Grand Prix, Kawajiri has since rebounded, picking up a particularly impressive decision win over **Gesias Cavalcante**, a top

fighter five years his junior. That match confirmed what we've all known for years now: that the Crusher is a man with staying power.

Kennedy, Tim

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 9/1/79

Debut: IFC WC 15 (8/31/01)

Career Record: 12-2

Notable Wins: Jason Miller (Extreme Challenge 50); Nick Thompson (Strikeforce: Challenge 2); Trevor Prangle (Strikeforce: Los Angeles)

Notable Loss: Jason Miller (HDNet Fights: Reckless Abandon)

For some fighters, going to the resort town of Big Bear, California, for a few weeks before a fight helps toughen them up and get them focused. Army Staff Sergeant Tim Kennedy is not that brand of tough. Before the Army Combatives tournament in 2005, Kennedy wasn't roughing it in cabin with his boys. He was completing one of the Army's most difficult courses. SERE stands for Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape. You start in the woods of Fort Bragg, on your own, with some of the Army's top Special Forces soldiers trying to track you down. That's the easy part.

When you are captured — and you will be — you are taken prisoner. Then they will break you — however they can. Remember all of the atrocities at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq? Forced nudity, stress positions, endless physical training, even water boarding? The Army does this to its own soldiers at SERE

In Their Own Words: Tim Kennedy on being a soldier and a fighter

"Days are long. I start my days real early when I do my conditioning and my strength training and my day ends real late when I get off work and then go to the gym and work on my boxing and jiu-jitsu. The military has been good to me, and I don't have any complaints there. I know that even when I'm talking with companies about when my fights are coming up, I'm still in the military. When something comes up I'm going to have to press pause on my fighting and take care of my first commitment and keep my word and do whatever it is the Army has asked me to do.

"Am I giving enough to my fighting? Am I giving enough to my country? Am I doing everything I possibly can to be a good soldier? That's something I have other people keeping me accountable on, to make sure I'm doing the right thing all the time."

school to prepare them for the worst-case scenario. One week before his fights in 2005, the Army tried to break Tim Kennedy. Instead, he won the tournament. Tim Kennedy is that kind of tough.

When Arizona Cardinals football star Pat Tillman left fame and fortune behind to serve his country in the Army Rangers, it was national news. More quietly, a fledgling professional fighter from San Luis Obispo, California, made the same leap. Tim Kennedy was a Columbia graduate, so it's no surprise that the attacks of September 11th affected him profoundly. He had a successful career just taking off in MMA, beating Cruz Chacon and **Jason Miller** at Extreme Challenge 50. He seemed on the path to **UFC** stardom, but instead didn't fight again for three years. At least not professionally. Instead he joined the Army, went to Iraq, went to Ranger School, and became one of the most elite soldiers in the world when he moved to the Special Forces. Instead of **UFC** champion, Kennedy became an honest-to-goodness war hero.

Kerr, Mark

Nicknames: The Specimen, The Smashing Machine

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 255 lbs

Born: 12/21/68

Debut: World Vale Tudo Championship 3 (1/19/97)

Career Record: 15-11 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Paul Varelans (World Vale Tudo Championship 3); Pedro Otavio (Pride 3); Enson Inoue (Pride Grand Prix 2000)

Notable Losses: Kazuyuki Fujita (Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 12); Heath Herring (Pride 15); Oleg Taktarov (Yamma Pit Fighting)

Former **UFC** tournament champion Mark Kerr has been immersed in the world of MMA since his freshman year in high school, even if he didn't know it at the time. That was in 1983, ten years before the first **UFC**. Kerr spent that freshman year working out with a grizzled senior by the name of **Pat Miletich**, another future **UFC** champ.

College was like another **UFC** all-star team. Kerr faced off with the now legendary **Randy Couture** in the finals of the 1992 NCAA tournament. Couture was a great collegiate wrestler, but Kerr made him look like a chump, winning the NCAA title by a score of 12-4. It was a tremendous victory, one that helped propel Kerr onto the national stage. Before he could make a run at the Olympic Games, however, Kerr had to find the right weight class. Cutting down to 190 pounds, like he did in college, just wasn't an option anymore.

"In that last year of college, for me to get down to 190 pounds, I had to cut 46 pounds from my preseason physical," Kerr said. "Imagine that. So

when the floodgates opened and I was able to eat all year long, my body just filled out. I had forgotten how comforting food is.”

Kerr fell short of his Olympic dream, losing to future gold medalist Kurt Angle in the qualifying tournament. Like many former **wrestling** standouts, Kerr followed a coach, Richard Hamilton, into the world of MMA. Kerr quickly established himself as one of the most dominating fighters on the face of the planet. While Kerr enjoyed the monetary compensation, he found out right away that the fight game was far from glamorous. His first fight tournament was in Brazil, hidden away in the basement of a hotel. From there he moved immediately into the UFC where he won consecutive tournaments at UFC 14 and 15.

Then trouble started. Kerr’s contract called for one more tournament, but the UFC wanted to go another direction and book single bouts. Kerr saw an opening and looked to escape his UFC contract for greener pastures in Japan with the newly formed **Pride Fighting Championships**.

“They sued me in federal court and put me through every circumstance you could imagine,” Kerr said. “I’d get a phone call that would say you have to be in New York City to be deposed tomorrow. I’d pay \$1,000 on airline tickets and then they’d ask me three questions and send me home. It was ugly.”

In the end, Kerr bought the contract out and became an immediate icon in Japan for Pride. Most people in the sport considered him the best heavyweight in the world. Looking back, it’s hard to see that in retrospect. Kerr was an amazing wrestler and a solid all-around fighter. Unfortunately, he never faced the level of competition that would have allowed him to prove his worth. His first 11 opponents had a combined record of 60–51–2. More than half of the wins came courtesy of Pedro Otavio and Dan Bobish.



In Their Own Words: Kerr on working with Nobuhiko Takada in Pride

"I made it perfectly clear that it was my reputation and my integrity on the line. I made it clear to them that there was no way I would ever compromise it for financial gain. It would be too hard for me to carry that to bed every night.

"This is the way the Japanese do business. They pulled me aside and said, 'Hey Mark, we want to talk to you about something you maybe don't understand. The Japanese fans, they love technique. They really know this sport and are familiar with it and the techniques.' That being said to me, well, you can kind of fill in the lines. Meaning, they don't want to see me get on top of him and pound the crap out of him. That's what I took out of the conversation. It was a whole conversation with the promoters talking about how they appreciated technical things. And they just left it at that. I left the meeting kind of chuckling. If I needed to go out there and punch him in the face until his nose fell [off] I would have done it. But he gave up the submission, and that was easier for me."

While kickboxing champion Branko Cikatic and **Luta Livre** ace Hugo Duarte ended up being MMA busts, Kerr did face the best of the best in grappling competition. While many wrestlers stuck with the skills that brought them to the game, Kerr branched out into submission grappling and was nigh unbeatable. The same thing couldn't be said in the ring. **Igor Vovchanchyn** knocked Kerr out, a loss later changed to a no contest due to illegal knees. Knees to the head of a grounded opponent were illegal on that night, one of many rules shifts that made fighting in Pride such an adventure. Even though the fight was not officially a loss, it ruined Kerr's reputation for invincibility, and sent his life spiraling out of control. The fall from grace due to drug abuse was made thoroughly public in the documentary film *The Smashing Machine*.

Kerr took three years off before coming back to the ring, only to knock himself out with a powerful takedown against Japanese fighter Yoshisha Yamamoto. Kerr dropped Yamamoto so hard to the mat that his own head struck the ground and knocked him unconscious. He stayed out of MMA for almost three more years after that, but has returned to fight several times a year, losing seven of his last nine and five in a row. It's apparent that while he is healthier and happier, Kerr will never be the same athlete again.

Keylock: see **Kimura** and **Americana**

Kharitonov, Sergei

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 242 lbs

Born: 8/18/80

Debut: Brilliant 2 (8/11/00)

Career Record: 16-4

Notable Wins: Murilo Rua (Pride Total Elimination 2004); Semmy Schilt (Pride Critical Countdown 2004); Pedro Rizzo (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Fabricio Werdum (Pride 30); Alistair Overeem (Hero's 10)

Notable Losses: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Final Conflict 2004); Alistair Overeem (Pride 31); Aleksander Emelianenko (Pride Final Conflict Absolute); Jeff Monson (Dream 8)

It's easy to forget that not long ago, Sergei Kharitonov was a top-ten heavy-weight on virtually everyone's list. And rightly so: the heavy-handed Russian soldier with technically sound **boxing** and an aggressive **sambo** grappling game made quite an impression as he demolished **Chute Boxe's Murilo Rua** and sliced up kickboxing giant Semmy Schilt in **Pride's** 2004 heavyweight Grand Prix tournament. Although his tournament run ended when he dropped a unanimous decision to **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, his reputation hardly took a hit by going the distance with one of the greatest heavyweight fighters the sport has seen. After that most minor setback, Kharitonov continued to roll, stopping the inconsistent but dangerous **Pedro Rizzo** early and earning a tough split-decision win over **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** standout **Fabricio Werdum**.

Then, 2006 happened. Ugly first round TKO losses to both **Alistair Overeem** and **Aleksander Emelianenko**, fighters Kharitonov was expected to handle, ended any speculation about the specific problems Kharitonov might pose for **Fedor Emelianenko**. If those losses, coupled with the emergence of what would turn out to be chronic back trouble, signaled the beginning of the end of Kharitonov's run as a serious heavyweight contender, an embarrassing submission loss to **Jeff Monson** in less than two minutes in **Dream** signaled the end, full stop.

Kikuchi, Akira

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 167 lbs

Born: 7/23/78

Debut: Shooto: Treasure Hunt 2 (1/25/02)

Career Record: 16-4

Notable Wins: Jake Shields (Shooto 2004: Year End Show); Katsuya Inoue (Hero's 2)

Notable Losses: Jake Shields (Shooto 2003: 8/10 in Yokohama Gymnasium); Shinya Aoki (Shooto: Victory of the Truth, Shooto: Back to Our Roots 1); Yoshiyuki Yoshida (GCM: Cage Force 4)

Shooto stalwart Akira Kikuchi was a **judo** and **wrestling** stylist with competent standup, neatly efficient takedowns, and an aggressive, submission-oriented top game. He was also, for a time, Japan's top welterweight fighter.

Kikuchi's crowning moment came in late 2004, when he took a unanimous decision in a one-sided drubbing of **Jake Shields** to claim the Shooto middleweight (167 pounds) title and avenge his only career loss to that point. Over the course of three dominant rounds, Kikuchi schooled Shields in all phases of the ground game, making him look slow and confused — the last words one would usually use to describe Shields' grappling. That match stands as Jake Shields' only loss over the course of seven years and eighteen fights.

In his only appearances in the big leagues of Japanese MMA, Kikuchi picked up two **Hero's** wins over the next year, including a devastating first round **ground and pound** stoppage over interim King of **Pancrase** Katsuya Inoue. Kikuchi was riding high, and entered his Shooto title defense against a young **Shinya Aoki** as the prohibitive favorite. But after two competitive rounds, Kikuchi spent virtually the entire third and final round of the championship bout with Aoki clinging to his back while Aoki landed headshots that made up in quantity what they lacked in quality. Despite his best efforts, including an improvised forward rolling head spike maneuver, a bloodied Kikuchi was unable to shake the young grappler, and his title reign was over.

The match cost him more than his title: Kikuchi and indeed the entire Killer Bee fight team was banned from both amateur and professional Shooto for six months after a bizarre incident during the Aoki fight, in which the hotheaded **Norifumi "Kid" Yamamoto** kicked and berated a fight doctor for not agreeing that Kikuchi had been cut by an illegal elbow.

An improved showing against Aoki a year to the day later wasn't enough to reclaim his Shooto title, but Kikuchi nevertheless entered the 2007 **Cage Force** welterweight tournament as the man to beat. A positional slip up on the ground in the semi-final against **Yoshiyuki Yoshida** saw Kikuchi beaten with a barrage of elbows — ending the fight, Kikuchi's shot at a **UFC** contract, and his career. Kikuchi unexpectedly announced his retirement at the age of 29.

Kikuta, Sanae

Nickname: Newaza King

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 200 lbs

Born: 9/10/71

Debut: Lumax Cup Tournament of J '96 (3/30/96)

Career Record: 28-6-3 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Ikuhisa Minowa (Pancrase: 2001 Anniversary Show); Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase: Breakthrough 11); Hidehiko Yoshida (Sengoku: No Ran 2009)

Notable Losses: Renzo Gracie (Pride 2); Murilo Bustamante (Pancrase: Trans 6); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (UFO: Legend); Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: Hybrid 10)

Founder of the **Grabaka** (“grappling fool”) gym and fight team, and a former light heavyweight King of **Pancrase**, Sanae Kikuta is also one of the few non-**Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** based competitors to win his division at the **ADCC** submission **wrestling** championships.

As a young **judo** player, Kikuta won the prestigious National Athletic High School Meeting, and studied under judo legend Toshihiko Koga at Nippon College of Physical Education. After leaving both college and competitive judo behind, Kikuta made his MMA debut in the now largely forgotten Lumax Cup, an event contested on an open mat surface (rather than in a ring or cage) that required its competitors to wear open-fingered gloves and a **gi** jacket (but not gi pants). Kikuta’s Tournament of J ’96 and heavyweight Tournament of J ’97 Lumax Cup titles earned him a place in **Pride**’s second ever event, where the submission expert proceeded to lay in **Renzo Gracie**’s **guard** for the better part of an hour before falling prey to a **guillotine choke** in a bout even duller than one would expect given that description.

Although Kikuta had his moments in **Pride**, **Shooto**, **Deep**, and even the **UFC**, it was in **Pancrase** that Kikuta found the most success, claiming that organization’s light heavyweight title in 2001 with a cut-stoppage win over the entertaining **Ikuhisa Minowa**, and holding it until a KO loss two years later to fellow **Pancrase** stalwart Yuki Kondo as part of the ongoing rivalry between Kikuta’s **Grabaka** and Kondo’s **Pancrase-ism** fight teams. Although the aging Kikuta’s MMA appearances have become increasingly rare in recent years, he has found a home in **Sengoku**, where, most notably, he earned a narrow, split-decision victory over fellow ancient judoka **Hidehiko Yoshida** in a match that saw only marginally more action than Kikuta’s **Gracie** bout years before.

Kim, Dong Hyun

Nickname: Stun Gun

Height: 6’1”

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 11/17/81

Debut: Spirit MC 3 (4/10/04)

Career Record: 13-0-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Jason Tan (UFC 84); Matt Brown (UFC 88); T.J. Grant (UFC 100)

Dong Hyun “Stun Gun” Kim might seem like just another welterweight prospect. Young, undefeated, but largely untested, the slim **judo** player shows promise but hardly stands out from the crowd — unless you happen to be

Korean. Then he's actually kind of a big deal. Kim's **UFC** debut against Jason Tan was the subject of a one-hour, prime time hype special in Korea, and that preliminary match — which Kim won with hard elbows after a spectacular harai goshi judo throw — was aired three times on Korean TV before the regular broadcast got underway.

Perhaps surprisingly, Kim is only the second Korean to fight inside the Octagon (the first was the notorious Joe Son all the way back at **UFC 4**), and the martial-arts-mad nation has embraced Kim as their champion. Kim's early success in the **Spirit MC** and **Deep** promotions earned him a **Pride** contract just as the once great Japanese organization was crumbling. Although Kim was offered a contract with **World Extreme Cagefighting** by the new owners, it was ultimately decided that a deal with the **UFC**, with its existing television presence in Korea, had a bigger upside for both parties.

His much-hyped debut against Jason Tan was followed by a split decision win over Matt Brown, a cult hero from *The Ultimate Fighter's* seventh season, and a decision loss to **Karo Parisyan** that was later overturned when post-fight drug tests revealed Parisyan to be a walking pharmacy. Kim was given the opportunity to fight in the prelims of the historic **UFC 100** card, and earned a solid decision win over Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia's T.J. Grant, a promising young **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** fighter with a fine **wrestling** base. If Kim can maintain his winning ways, he'll soon find himself not just in prelims but on the main card, maybe someday with a title shot. But in his native Korea, he's a headliner already.

Kim, Min-Soo

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 254 lbs

Born: 1/22/75

Debut: Hero's 1 (3/26/05)

Career Record: 3-6

Notable Win: Ikuhisa Minowa (Hero's Korea 2007)

Notable Losses: Bob Sapp (Hero's 1); Semmy Schilt (Hero's 6); Don Frye (Hero's 7); Brock Lesnar (Dynamite!! USA)

Min-Soo Kim can't fight. But that hasn't kept him from trying. And, for whatever reason, it hasn't kept K-1 from running him out there.

In the first minute of his MMA debut against **Bob Sapp**, Kim looked unpolished but legitimately dangerous, stopping Sapp's headlong charge with a flurry of punches that sent "The Beast" to a neutral corner to have his bloodied face checked over by officials. That's Kim's career highlight — it's been downhill ever since. Seconds after the match was restarted, the Min-Soo Kim

we would come to know emerged: he caught a lead right hand directly on the chin, and the match was stopped at 1:12 of the first.

There are the wins — over professional wrestlers Sean O’Haire and Yoshihisa Yamamoto, and the much, much smaller **Ikuhisa Minowa** — and there are the KO losses — to kickboxers Ray Sefo and Mighty Mo, and hero-to-all **Don Frye**. But above all, there is the *awfulness*. Despite taking a silver medal in **judo** at the 1996 Olympics, Kim hasn’t shown even minimal grappling skill in MMA (witness, if you dare, his submission loss by **triangle choke** to Dutch kickboxer Semmy Schilt).

Kim is best known to North American fans as a footnote, the first man to face **Brock Lesnar** in an MMA bout. A late substitution for Korean giant Hong-Man Choi, who failed a pre-fight medical, Kim was utterly overmatched and overwhelmed against the future **UFC** heavyweight champ. Kim was the first to be taken down and ingloriously pounded out by Lesnar, but he wouldn’t be the last.

Kimura and Americana

Closely related arm locks, usually though not exclusively applied on the ground, in which the attacker controls his opponent’s wrist, and grasps the wrist of his own controlling arm with his free hand such that the opponent’s arm is isolated and entangled. Maintaining a 90-degree angle in the opponent’s elbow, the attacker twists the arm, applying pressure to the elbow, shoulder, or both. If the opponent’s trapped arm is configured such that his hand begins near his head, the hold is referred to in **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** as an Americana; if the trapped hand begins near his hip, it’s known as the Kimura. In **judo**, both techniques are classified as ude garami, literally “arm entanglement,” although occasionally the Kimura variation is referred to as gyaku ude garami, “reverse arm entanglement.” **Catch wrestlers** sometimes favor the terms key lock, figure four, or double wristlock. Different disciplines, different nomenclature, but in the context of mixed martial arts, it’s the clear and useful Brazilian Jiu-jitsu terminology that dominates.

But it’s fitting that the terms now widely used to describe these techniques — techniques important to several styles — originated in encounters between the Gracie family and practitioners of those other arts. The American after whom the Americana is named is wrestling legend Bob Anderson, who trained with Rolls Gracie in the 1970s. “I didn’t come down there and go, ‘Okay, I’m going to show you the Americana **arm bar** and I’m the guy that invented it,’” Anderson recalled. “It just grew out of what I knew and what he [Rolls] liked . . . he later — I didn’t even know — he called it the Americana because

I was the American wrestler that came down and showed him the move and that's how the Americana arm bar got started." The Kimura is named in tribute to **Masahiko Kimura**, the Japanese judo legend who broke **Helio Gracie**'s arm with the technique in their famous 1955 bout in Rio's Estádio do Maracanã, forcing Gracie's corner to concede the match.

While the Americana is a proven, effective technique from **side control**, **north-south**, **mount**, and for the top fighter in **half-guard**, the Kimura is a vastly more versatile technique. The Kimura can be applied in any of those same positions, often with less risk of escape. Additionally, the Kimura can be used to initiate a variety of sweeps from **guard** or half-guard, and is a much more effective fight ender from the bottom than the Americana (although finishing from the bottom with either technique is difficult against a skilled top player). Successful standing applications of the Kimura are less common, but **Karo Parisyan**'s Kimura grip sumi-gaeshi sacrifice throw and finish against Dave Strasser at **UFC 44**, Mitsuhiro Ishida's similar Kimura grip sumi-gaeshi transition to arm bar against Justin Wilcox in **Strikeforce**, and the great **Kazushi Sakuraba**'s Kimura counter after **Renzo Gracie** took his back standing at **Pride 10** are suggestive of the possibilities. Watching that Pride match, those who knew their history recognized that it wasn't the first time a member of the famed Gracie family fell prey to this hold against a top Japanese grappler, nor was it the first time his arm snapped under the strain. It wasn't the first time a Gracie refused to quit, either.

Kimura, Masahiko

No one before Kimura, they say, and no one after. A four-time All-Japan **judo** champion with only four documented losses over the course of his long competitive career, Masahiko Kimura is universally regarded as one of the finest judo players of all time and one of the greatest grapplers of the 20th century. His expertise in *ne waza* (ground fighting) was surpassed only by his mastery of *osoto gari*, an outside trip he would practice by slamming his body against a tree — and cruelly slamming his unlucky training partners off the mat. Kimura fell out of favor with the Japanese judo establishment when, after his final All-Japan title, he turned down the position of chief instructor for the Tokyo Metropolitan Police and instead took up with a short-lived professional judo circuit before falling in with the world of **professional wrestling**. For this betrayal of judo's longstanding spirit of amateurism, Kimura's rank was frozen, and he never progressed past the *schihidan* (seventh-degree black belt) he had been awarded in 1947 at the age of 30.

But Kimura, whose wife was in hospital with tuberculosis, needed money much more urgently than he needed rank. He took a three-month contract to

In Their Own Words: Masahiko Kimura on his contest against Helio Gracie (from *My Judo*)

“The gong rang. Helio grabbed me in both lapels, and attacked me with O-soto-gari and Kouchi-gari. But they did not move me at all. Now it’s my turn. I blew him away up in the air by O-uchi-gari, Harai-goshi, Uchimata, Ippon-seoi. At about ten-minute mark, I threw him by O-soto-gari. I intended to cause a concussion. But since the mat was so soft . . . it did not have much impact on him. While continuing to throw him, I was thinking of a finishing method. I threw him by O-soto-gari again. As soon as Helio fell, I pinned him by Kuzure-kami-shihogatame. I held still for two or three minutes, and then tried to smother him by belly. Helio shook his head trying to breathe. He could not take it any longer, and tried to push up my body extending his left arm. That moment, I grabbed his left wrist with my right hand, and twisted up his arm. I applied Udegarami. I thought he would surrender immediately. But Helio would not tap the mat. I had no choice but keep on twisting the arm. The stadium became quiet. The bone of his arm was coming close to the breaking point. Finally, the sound of bone breaking echoed throughout the stadium. Helio still did not surrender. His left arm was already powerless. Under this rule, I had no choice but twist the arm again. There was plenty of time left. I twisted the left arm again. Another bone was broken. Helio still did not tap. When I tried to twist the arm once more, a white towel was thrown in. I won by TKO. My hand was raised high. Japanese Brazilians rushed into the ring and tossed me up in the air. On the other hand, Helio let his left arm hang and looked very sad withstanding the pain.”

give judo exhibitions and take on local challengers in the Hawaiian Islands, and agreed to a four-month stint in Brazil for a Japanese newspaper promoting professional wrestling events. Kimura came to Brazil to perform, not to fight, but once there he felt compelled to answer the repeated challenges of **Helio Gracie** — especially after Gracie defeated Kato, another Japanese judoka on the tour, choking him into unconsciousness. Gracie, who had refined the judo basics his older brother Carlos had learned under the tutelage of **Mitsuyo Maeda** into his own Gracie Jiu-jitsu, would reveal years later that he knew the challenge was hopeless from the beginning. “I myself thought that nobody in the world could defeat Kimura,” he told Yoshinori Nishi in 1994.

He was right. In front of thousands in Rio’s Estádio do Maracanã, Kimura tossed Gracie around effortlessly, thoroughly controlled him on the mat, and

ultimately finished the fight with ude garami, the entangled arm lock that has since been known in jiu-jitsu and mixed martial arts circles by the great judoka's name. Kimura never knew it, but it wasn't the first hold that had incapacitated Gracie that night: in that same remarkable 1994 interview, Gracie admitted that he had been caught in a chokehold earlier in the bout, and lapsed into unconsciousness while trying to decide whether or not he should submit. "But since I didn't give up," he remembered, "Kimura let go of the choke and went into the next technique. Being released from the choke and the pain from the next technique revived me and I continued to fight. Kimura went to his grave without ever knowing the fact that I was finished."

After his years as a traveling showman, Kimura took up a teaching position at Tokushoku University in 1960, where he trained Kaneo Iwatsuri to an All-Japan title and Canadian Doug Rogers to a silver medal at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. After a life lived as one of Japan's most celebrated judo heroes, Kimura's legend has only grown since his death in 1993 at the age of 75.

King of the Cage

No one can accuse King of the Cage (KOTC) owner Terry Trebilcock of jumping on the MMA bandwagon. When he started his California-based promotion in 1998, MMA was close to extinction in North America. The sport was banned in many states, including California, and Trebilcock and other promoters spent much of their time traipsing through Indian casinos, looking for an arena to host their shows.

Despite the MMA-unfriendly atmosphere, King of the Cage did very well, eventually becoming the second biggest promotion in the country. Many of the best fighters in the world got their start in Trebilcock's cage, most notably former **UFC** light heavyweight champion **Quinton Jackson** and *The Ultimate Fighter* season 1 winner **Diego Sanchez**.

Although King of the Cage never passed the UFC as the top promotion in the world, their fights were certainly available to more fans. An amazing DVD distribution deal saw KOTC DVDs on the shelf at Best Buy and FYE at a time when the UFC didn't even have a video deal. Many KOTC video packages included up to ten full fight cards on a five-DVD set. Affordably priced, the sets were popular with hard-core fans searching for hidden gems on cards featuring mainly local talent.

In 2007, Trebilcock sold the promotion to **EliteXC**, but continued running it as if nothing had changed. When EliteXC failed, he bought KOTC back and continued going strong. Always looking to break new ground, Trebilcock entered into partnership with reality TV guru Mark Burnett of *Survivor* fame.

Together, they created *Bully Beatdown*, the popular MTV show starring **Jason “Mayhem” Miller**.

Today the company is no longer a major feeder system to the UFC or the main Japanese promotions. Most of the cards are produced with a local and not a national audience in mind. While this may make the shows unpalatable to many fans, it ensures they do well in the local market in tough economic times.

Knee bar: see **Leg locks**

Kohsaka, Tsuyoshi

Nickname: TK

Height: 5’11”

Weight: 225 lbs

Born: 3/6/70

Debut: Rings: Budokan Hall 1995 (1/25/95)

Career Record: 26-18-2 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Pete Williams (UFC 17.5); Fedor Emelianenko (Rings: King of Kings 2000 Block B); Ron Waterman (Pancrase: Brave 10); Mario Sperry (Pride 31)

Notable Losses: Bas Rutten (UFC 18); Pedro Rizzo (UFC 23); Randy Couture (Rings: King of Kings 2000 Final); Renato Sobral (Rings: Worth Title Series 2); Ricco Rodriguez (UFC 37); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride Bushido 6); Mark Hunt (Pride Total Elimination Absolute)

Tsuyoshi Kohsaka’s name survives as a footnote: the first and, for years, only man to defeat the great **Fedor Emelianenko**. There is, however, a footnote to that footnote: it was an inadvertent, illegal elbow thrown only seconds into the first round that ended that bout. The right call would have been a no contest, but, as part of **Rings’** King of Kings tournament, the match needed a winner. And so it was the veteran Kohsaka who advanced and the newcomer Emelianenko who was saddled with the loss.

That brief fight with its lucky finish has kept Kohsaka’s name in the sport years after his retirement. It is, in a sense, his legacy. But it was the kind of heart and determination a battered and bruised TK showed in a second match with Emelianenko years later — a fighting spirit he’d shown throughout his long career — that made him one of the best loved fighters of the sport’s early years among hard-core fans. TK was a cult classic.

A fourth degree black belt and member of Toray Corporation’s **judo** team (big Japanese companies often “employ” promising athletes), it was a serious knee injury that ended Kohsaka’s career in his first sport in 1993. A year later, he debuted in **Akira Maeda**’s shoot-style Rings promotion, a proto-MMA

organization that offered both worked and legitimate matches alongside each other on the same cards. Although Rings consisted of nothing but legitimate contests by the end of the decade (and featured many future top **Pride** and **UFC** fighters), it's hard to know exactly what to make of the early years of Kohsaka's career. While all of the familiar MMA databases list Kohsaka's June 27, 1998, draw against **Kiyoshi Tamura** as a legitimate fight, **professional wrestling** fans refer to the bout as one of the top shoot-style works of the decade. Take TK's win-loss record with a grain of salt.

What can we say with certainty, then? What do we *know* was real? His tournament win in the open-mat, gi-mandatory Lumax Cup, his decision win over **Pete Williams** and dramatic overtime KO loss to **Bas Rutten** in the UFC's heavyweight title tournament, and his late Rings bouts against the likes of **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** and **Randy Couture** certainly all check out. As does his pioneering cross training with **Maurice Smith** and **Frank Shamrock** as part of the Alliance (the "TK Guard" was, at one time, much discussed). So too does his **Pancrase** super heavyweight title win over the enormous **Ron Waterman**, his stoppage of **Brazilian Top Team** co-founder **Mario Sperry**, and his tragically heroic effort against **Mark Hunt** in what would turn out to be his farewell bout. When the referee stepped between Hunt and a thoroughly pounded Kohsaka to stop the fight with less than a minute to go, TK was devastated. No doubt he wanted it to end like his famous "contest" against Tamura years before, nobly holding on as the seconds wound down, going the distance.

Koppenhaver, Jon: see **War Machine**

Koscheck, Josh

Nickname: Kos

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 11/30/71

Debut: King of the Rockies (1/3/04)

Career Record: 15-4

Notable Wins: Chris Leben (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1); Diego Sanchez (UFC 69); Dustin Hazelett (UFC 82); Yoshiyuki Yoshida (UFC: Fight for the Troops); Frank Trigg (UFC 103)

Notable Losses: Georges St. Pierre (UFC 74); Thiago Alves (UFC 90); Paulo Thiago (UFC 95)

The grudge match between Josh Koscheck and **Chris Leben** on the first season of *The Ultimate Fighter* was, at the time, the most watched mixed martial arts contest in U.S. television history. An audience of more than two million viewers watched Leben, an alcoholic with serious abandonment issues, try to exact his revenge against a man who had the *audacity* to spray him with a hose

after a night of drinking. It was pretty lame. And the fight itself wasn't much: Koscheck, a 2001 NCAA Division I **wrestling** champion, blanketed the over-matched Leben in a classic display of **lay and pray** en route to a one-sided decision win. But the Leben/Koscheck feud helped make the early episodes of *The Ultimate Fighter* a ratings success, and it's no secret that the success of *The Ultimate Fighter* was instrumental in transforming the failing **UFC** into the juggernaut we know today, taking the sport from relative obscurity into the mainstream. You can thank Josh Koscheck the next time you see him.

Koscheck's reputation as a blanket — a wrestler content to take his opponent down and then do exactly nothing — started with the Leben fight and dogged him throughout the early bouts of his UFC career. But after falling in with the American Kickboxing Academy, Koscheck transformed from a highly accomplished but one-dimensional wrestler into a well-rounded mixed martial artist. He avenged his *TUF* loss to the previously undefeated **Diego Sanchez**, proudly announcing Sanchez's record after their fight as "Nineteen and one! Nineteen and *one!*" All of a sudden Koscheck was putting together slick combinations, even throwing head kicks — just ask **Dustin Hazelett**, who found himself on the wrong end of both.

But there have been bumps along the road. At UFC 74, Koscheck had the misfortune of running into **Georges St. Pierre** in his first fight back after he shockingly dropped his title to **Matt Serra**. There's never a good time to face GSP, but this was arguably the worst. It was no surprise that St. Pierre emerged the victor; what was surprising was that Koscheck was outwrestled. That hadn't happened before, and it hasn't happened since. He dropped a fight to the dangerous and enormous **Thiago Alves**, a bout he took on only two weeks' notice, and was stopped by Paulo Thiago in his UFC debut. For all the ups and downs, though, there can be no doubt that Josh Koscheck's name belongs among the top ten welterweights in the world.

Kuk Sool Won

In the early days of the **UFC**, when a fighter didn't practice a martial art, it became necessary to manufacture a fighting background. Streetfighter **Tank Abbott** famously became a "pit fighter." Like Abbott, **Gary Goodridge**'s fighting credentials essentially involved being an extremely large man.

In 1996, a lot of extremely large men wanted to get into the UFC. Goodridge needed a gimmick and pretended to be an expert in Kuk Sool Won. Kuk Sool Won is modern Korea's favorite martial art, but it may not have been the best choice for Goodridge's fake fighting art. It incorporates a jumble of dazzling high kicks, animal movements, and spinning techniques — the exact opposite

of Goodridge's straightforward steamroller approach.

Kuk Sool Won practitioners, martial artists who place a premium on physical conditioning and flexibility, may have been embarrassed by their faux comrade when he proved to have less than stellar cardio. But they were surely happy to claim him when he nearly caved in Paul Herrera's skull with a series of brutal elbows. A true Kuk Sool Won artist could have helped heal Herrera with acupuncture and herbs. Unfortunately for Paul, Goodridge was only good for flexing his muscles and yelling.

Kung fu

The famous Shaolin monastery sits in at the base of the Songshan Mountain in China. Its monks, clad in orange robes, seemed like easy targets for bandits when they approached in 725 AD. The robbers were in for a rude surprise. These monks not only studied the teachings of the Buddha, they also perfected their physical strength and mastered the art of kung fu. The bandits were defeated and the Shaolin monks secured a lasting legacy.

Their techniques and strategies formed the basis of hundreds of martial systems. In fact, kung fu doesn't describe any single art form. It's a generic term that refers to a practitioner's skill level, not any particular martial system. The term, and the modern equivalent Wushu, are essentially shorthand for "Chinese martial arts."

For practical purposes, in the cage, any and all forms of kung fu have been dismal failures. Many Chinese martial artists focus more on show than combat. For the warriors who do train for real fighting, much of the technique involves the use of weapons. MMA may be extreme, but it doesn't allow bo staffs or broadswords.

The Chinese government may have encouraged kung fu's current emphasis on showmanship, but kung fu was at one point more than a Cirque du Soleil act. Until the practice was banned in 1928, kung fu fighters tested their mettle on the Lei Tai. The Lei Tai was a raised platform. Two men went up, but on many occasions only one came down. Or, at least, came down alive. If only modern kung fu fighters were as strong, fierce, or as fast as lightning.

■ **Emin Boztepe: Chicken?**

When **Royce Gracie** ran through a bevy of traditional martial artists in the first several **Ultimate Fighting Championships**, many people who made their living selling kung fu and karate panicked. And rightfully so: Gracie was talking the talk and then backing up his words in the cage. The Asian arts were looking more than a little silly and it was threatening to cost them money.

The martial arts magazines and the emerging internet forums were filled with traditional martial artists arguing and explaining to any who would listen that their style was perfectly suited to defeat the Gracies. Others, like Wing Tsun master Emin Boztepe, seemed above the fray. That is, above the fray until a poster on a message board forum called Boztepe a chicken. Then it was on. Well, almost on. Boztepe wrote a scathing letter to Cinturon Negro in Europe, claiming the UFC was fake, that he himself was undefeated after more than 300 bare-knuckle fights, and that he would bring five Wing Tsun masters to challenge the Gracies.

The feud escalated as UFC matchmaker **Art Davie** called his bluff, offering him a coveted spot in the UFC. Boztepe's lawyer and UFC frontmen **Rorion Gracie** and Davie exchanged a series of increasingly funny letters and faxes, trying to negotiate a time and a place for a Gracie/Boztepe superfight. Davie even offered Boztepe a one-on-one fight with Gracie, allowing the Wing Tsun man to avoid the customary UFC tournament.

No arrangement suited Boztepe, but the UFC matchmakers agreed that the idea of matching up Royce with an elite star, instead of putting him in a tournament for a fifth time, had plenty of promise. The Superfight was born, with **Ken Shamrock** assuming Boztepe's place as Gracie's challenger. It was a match the UFC had wanted badly to culminate UFC 3, but had fallen apart when both men were injured. The crowd was dying to see Shamrock and Gracie square off again – their Superfight held the distinction of being the most successful UFC show on pay-per-view for more than ten years.



Lashley, Bobby

Nickname: The Dominator

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 250 lbs

Born: 7/16/76

Debut: Mixed Fighting Alliance: There Will Be Blood (12/13/08)

Career Record: 5-0

Notable Wins: Jason Guida (SRP: March Badness); Bob Sapp (Ultimate Chaos); Wes Sims (Strikeforce: Miami)

Like fellow World Wrestling Entertainment refugee **Brock Lesnar**, Bobby Lashley is much more than a body builder who sees big dollar signs attached

In Their Own Words: Bobby Lashley on getting started as a pro wrestler

"Well, Kurt Angle was in the WWE at the time and he came to Colorado Springs to the Olympic Training Center. He was doing a little vignette, a promo, and they were talking about his amateur days. That was the first time I met Kurt. And Kurt said, 'Have you thought about it? You have a great look for the WWE.' At the time I was still wrestling, but I had watched it as a kid. I enjoyed it, but I had never seen myself doing it. We exchanged numbers and talked from time to time. Then I got a call from [WWE executive] Gerald Brisco because they were discussing me again. This time when they said, 'Come out and we'll have a look at you,' I did.

"It was probably the most fun I've had in my whole life. Professional wrestlers aren't actors, so we can't really play a character. Very, very few are good enough actors to play a character. Vince would say, 'We just want you to be yourself, but with the volume turned up. Think about who you are, and then turn the volume up.' It was actually a fun transition, because you get to find out who you are."

to the three letters M, M, and A. He was a world class wrestler, guiding Missouri Valley to its first two NAIA championships while winning three individual national titles of his own at 177 pounds. From college, it was on to the Army, where Lashley continued to excel on the mat, winning the Armed Forces Championship and earning a silver medal in the prestigious World Military Games in 2002.

Of course, it isn't this sterling record that attracts MMA promoters by the bucketful. His WWE experience does that. Three years of national television exposure, as well as a Wrestlemania 23 main event where he helped Donald Trump shave Vince McMahon bald, made Lashley, if not a household name, at the very least a recognizable face. With pay-per-view draws in short supply, Lashley will find no shortage of callers. In 2008, the **UFC** wasn't interested. **Dana White** even pretended not to know who Lashley was when asked about him in the media flurry over Lesnar's MMA ascendance. But it is a relative certainty that if Lashley can keep winning, his face will show up on Spike TV or on pay-per-view, sooner rather than later.

Lawal, Muhammed

Nickname: King Mo

Height: 6'

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 1/11/81

Debut: Sengoku: Fifth Battle (9/28/08) **Career Record:** 7-0

Notable Wins: Mark Kerr (M-I: Global:Breakthrough); Gegard Mousasi (Strikeforce: Nashville)

In the world of amateur wrestling, "King Mo" Lawal came as close as you can to the ultimate goal of every young wrestler: Olympic glory. After beating Andy Hrovat at the 2008 U.S. nationals, Lawal fell to Hrovat at the Olympic trials by a razor-thin margin. Lawal won match one; Hrovat match two. In the rubber match, the two men actually tied a thrilling battle that saw both score final-second points. Hrovat went on to the Olympic team by virtue of having the higher scoring individual technique.

It was a bitter pill for Lawal to swallow and at 27 he turned his attention to MMA. The Olympic trials were in June — by September he was making his fighting debut for **World Victory Road: Sengoku**.

Success has come quickly for Lawal in the mixed martial arts. He travels the world to find the best training partners and continues to refine his techniques. Mo is a self-described student of the game, often watching hours of film to get a feel for how the most successful fighters are able to impose their will. Lawal also has a naturally engaging personality, making his interviews

In Their Own Words: King Mo on the difference between collegiate and international wrestling

“The thing is, NCAA champions come a dime a dozen. To me NCAA champion is a joke. I don’t care about that. It’s a different level when you hit the world scene. International wrestling. That’s where you become a man. **Mark Kerr** was good, but he hasn’t wrestled in so long. After five years, once you stop competing and working out with world class athletes, your skills deteriorate. Look at **Dan Henderson, Matt Lindland**, and **Randy Couture**. Those guys get taken down by guys that have never wrestled before. If you haven’t trained wrestling in a while, your skills deteriorate. Same thing with jiu-jitsu and boxing.”

and ring entrances stand out in a sport that features many fighters that might be politely described as “bland.” At times his pre-fight antics are more exciting than his conservative fighting style — like dozens of world class wrestlers, King Mo hasn’t been afraid to **ground and pound** his way to victory, often drawing boos from bloodthirsty crowds. The jeering can rain down; Lawal intends to do what it takes to win, even if it isn’t popular with the crowd. Just 19 months into his career he defeated **Gegard Mousasi** to become the **Strikeforce** light heavyweight champion, solidifying his status as one of MMA’s top prospects.

Lawler, Robbie

Nickname: Ruthless

Height: 5’11”

Weight: 170-185 lbs

Born: 3/20/82

Debut: Extreme Challenge 39 (4/7/01)

Career Record: 19-6 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Joey Villaseñor (Pride 32); Frank Trigg (Icon: Epic); Scott Smith (EliteXC: Unfinished Business)

Notable Losses: Nick Diaz (UFC 47); Evan Tanner (UFC 50); Jason Miller (Icon: Mayhem vs. Lawler); Jake Shields (Strikeforce: Lawler vs. Shields)

Robbie Lawler was the **UFC**’s top prospect when **Zuffa** bought the company in 2001. Just 19 years old and a bit of a prodigy, he was one of the first fighters to literally grow up with the sport of MMA. **Pat Miletich** discovered him when he was still in high school and he’s been fighting ever since.

Things came easily to Lawler. He was a good natural athlete, a **wrestling** standout with natural power in his hands, and he had that itch to fight that you can’t teach. He won his first six fights before getting the call to come to



Bossier City, Louisiana, for UFC 37. Lawler opened the show with Midwest tough guy Aaron Riley, a punching bag quickly becoming famous for his grit and heart. It was a 15-minute war that saw Lawler get the win, and, more importantly, establish his reputation as a dangerous young fighter. More victories followed and Lawler got confident, bordering on cocky.

Cocky is the most dangerous thing to be in the sport of MMA, where every fighter is capable of hurting you in a dozen ways and it's incredibly easy to make a fight-changing mistake. Lawler's inability to control his emotions cost him again and again. He and Chris Lytle slung punches back and forth at UFC 45, with Lawler earning a decision and a place on the UFC highlight reel when he dropped his hands and yelled out in the middle of the fight, caught up in the moment.

Lawler, it seemed, was always caught up in the moment. His fights were wars but there was very little strategy involved. He simply attacked, as hard and as fast as he could. Lesser opponents were overwhelmed. Better fighters like **Nick Diaz** and **Evan Tanner** simply waited him out, eventually using his own aggression against him.

After losing three of four, he was sent on his way. The UFC brass wanted him to improve his skills. Everyone at Zuffa loved his attitude and his warrior spirit; they just wanted to see it combined with the tools that could make him a champion. Instead, Robbie Lawler has continued to be Robbie Lawler. He won two titles, for Icon Sport in Hawaii and for **EliteXC**, by exploding on people who made the mistake of standing and trading with him. Against slick grapplers, he was still vulnerable, losing by submission to **Jason "Mayhem"**

Miller and **Jake Shields** in high profile matchups. Now 27 years old, and almost a decade into his professional career, Lawler seems likely to remain the fighter he is today. The potential that seemed destined to make him a world champion will go unrealized. He may have the best fight on the card, but Robbie Lawler will never be the best fighter.

Lay and pray

For whatever reason, the mixed martial arts world loves its rhyming jargon. You've got **sprawl and brawl**, where a fighter uses their **wrestling** skills defensively in order to stand up and bang. You've got **ground and pound**, where fighters put their opponents on their back and rain down blows from the top. Those are both terms that fighters embrace to describe their strategies. There's nothing pejorative about either of them; they're purely descriptive. The same cannot be said of lay and pray, which is more like a charge leveled against a fighter than an openly discussed strategy. When a grappler establishes a strong top position but does nothing to finish the fight by improving position (see **positional hierarchy**), striking, or working towards a submission, that's lay and pray: lying on top of your opponent, and praying the judges' decision goes your way. If MMA were pure sport, it would be a perfectly sound strategy. But paying fans demand entertainment, and nothing brings on a chorus of boos faster than one man lying in another's **guard** with no action. **Sean Sherk** has been accused of lay and pray on more than one occasion — sometimes fairly, sometimes not — as have Gray Maynard, **Ricardo Arona**, and **Josh Koscheck** early in his career. But probably the most notorious lay and pray the sport has ever seen was **Ken Shamrock's** rematch against **Royce Gracie** at **UFC 5**, where Shamrock spent nearly all of the fight's 35 minutes inside Gracie's guard, doing absolutely nothing. The fight was not judged, and was declared a draw once the five-minute overtime had expired. You can't really pray for a judges' decision in an unjudged fight, so you could say Shamrock/Gracie II doesn't really count if you wanted to split hairs. But Shamrock did more than enough laying that night, and you've got think at least one prayer was uttered somewhere along the line.

Leah, Rachelle

Most of the time, ring card girls are nearly anonymous. They only have a single job to do: entertaining 10,000 bloodthirsty men during the one minute between rounds they aren't being actively amused by man-on-man action. Rachelle Leah transcended that role, making the leap from cageside eye candy to television eye candy.

In Their Own Words: Rachelle Leah on hosting *UFC All Access*

"I've had a lot of great moments hosting *All Access*. The most memorable was with **Anderson Silva**. He is hysterical. He's a goofball and you'd never expect it. As intense as he is in the Octagon, he's completely the opposite outside of it. He just started singing Michael Jackson. He was breaking it down and he got me to break it down on camera in his house. I took off my shoes and everything. Those kinds of moments, just be able to relax and be yourself, those are my favorite moments.

"If you met most of our guys, you wouldn't guess they were fighters. Some of them were teachers and have degrees. You go to their homes and see them in the gym and they're just perfectly normal."

Leah became the host of ***UFC All Access***, a Spike TV show designed to make the UFC's valiant warriors seem a little more human. Leah traveled to their homes, to the gym, and checked out their cars in UFC's homage to MTV's seminal *Cribs*.

Just as the UFC seemed to replace pro wrestling as the sport of choice for young men, Leah and fellow Octagon Girl Ariany Celeste took over for the WWE Divas as cultural icons. Leah was just the first to go mainstream, posing for the cover of *Playboy* and making the move into acting. Gone but not forgotten, Leah has opened the door for future Octagon beauties to go as far as their talent and determination can take them.

LeBell, Gene

The much-loved "**Judo**" Gene LeBell has done a little bit of everything over the course of his long and storied career. He's been an actor, a stuntman, a professional wrestler, and a two-time AAU national judo champion. He was the referee in the infamous proto-MMA debacle between Muhammad Ali and **Antonio Inoki**. He trained with both Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris. He took a vicious beating at the hands of Steve Martin in *The Jerk*. And depending on who you ask — long-time *Sports Illustrated* writer Jon Wertheim is the most credible to have gone on record with the story, though it has circulated in various forms for years — LeBell may very well have strangled pony-tailed action star Steven Seagal until he soiled himself on the set of *Under Siege*. In short, if it's incredibly cool, there's a pretty good chance Gene LeBell has done it, probably while wearing his signature pink gi and hamming it up for any cameras that happen to be nearby.

LeBell was an early advocate of cross-training in an era where that was hardly common practice, and competed in a bout closely resembling mixed martial arts decades before the sport really took shape. Billed as a “judo/karate” fighter, LeBell took on Milo Savage, a credible middleweight boxer, in a 1963 challenge match in Salt Lake City, and choked him out in the fourth three-minute round. LeBell later claimed that he passed up several opportunities to finish the fight earlier by **arm bar**, as he had no interest in breaking the arm in the likely event that Savage wouldn’t surrender. LeBell wanted to show that judo could be effective without causing serious injury.

“I was grappling before grappling was cool,” LeBell once said. And he’s still on the mats as he approaches his 80th birthday. He continues to teach every Monday night alongside his top student Gokor Chivichyan at the Hayastan Academy in North Hollywood, the gym that turned out **UFC** competitors **Karo Parisyan** and Manny Gamburyan. Should you have the good fortune to attend one of his seminars, and you’re willing to let LeBell put you all the way out, you’ll be rewarded with a little patch that reads, “I was choked out by Gene LeBell.” Just try to keep it together a little better than Seagal.

Leben, Chris

Nicknames: The Crippler, The Cat Smasher

Height: 5’11”

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 7/21/80

Debut: Full Contact Fighting Federation: Rumble at The Rose Garden 4 (8/10/02)

Career Record: 21-6

Notable Wins: Jason Thacker (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1 Finale); Patrick Côté (*Ultimate Fight Night* 1); Yoshihiro Akiyama (UFC 116)

Notable Losses: Josh Koscheck (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1); Kenny Florian (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1); Anderson Silva (*Ultimate Fight Night* 5); Michael Bisping (UFC 89)

In the debut episode of the very first season of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** (*TUF*), Chris Leben got ruinously drunk, pissed on Jason Thacker’s bed, and tore up the house after Bobby Southworth and **Josh Koscheck** sprayed him with a hose. It made him a star. Leben immediately set the tone for the series and modeled behavior for every subsequent marginal fighter looking for a few minutes of fame before they crashed out of the competition. In later seasons, it was not uncommon for fighters to invoke Chris Leben’s name when describing the kinds of shenanigans they got up to in the house (see **Browning, Junie**).

Leben’s *TUF* feud with Koscheck, however, ended not with a bang but a whimper when Leben couldn’t do anything at all with the vastly superior

wrestler, and the vastly superior wrestler couldn't do anything at all with his vastly superior position. Koscheck took the decision, but after an injury put Nate Quarry out of the tournament, Leben got another chance to "put the stamp on kids." He came up against **Kenny Florian**, who sliced Leben open with elbows and stopped him in the second round, but it wouldn't be the last we'd see of "The Cat Smasher," not by a long shot.

After *The Ultimate Fighter*, Leben became a staple of Spike TV's Ultimate Fight Night cards, picking up wins against mid-level competition in each of the first four events. Things began to unravel pretty quickly, however, after Leben followed a completely understandable first-minute loss to **Anderson Silva** with poor showings against the likes of Jason MacDonald and Kalib Starnes. Leben was still a crowd-pleaser with his heavy hands and wide open style, and he managed to get the best of Jorge Santiago, Terry Martin, and Alessio Sakara — all solid professionals, but not exactly contenders.

A probation violation and jail sentence stemming from a DUI cost Leben a high-profile **UFC 85** bout against **Michael Bisping**. After they finally met at **UFC 89**, Leben tested positive for Stanozolol, a banned **steroid**, and got hit with a one-year suspension only a week after a Spike TV special detailed Leben's triumph over his longstanding substance abuse issues. In 2010, with those troubles behind him, Leben proved himself a genuine middleweight contender when he managed to stay on his feet and finish Aaron Simpson, a well-credentialed wrestler, then surprised **Yoshihiro Akiyama** with a last-minute **triangle choke** only two weeks later. Leben had spent much of that bout being **judo** tossed and slugged in the face, and admitted afterwards that he didn't even know which round he was in — he had no idea just how dramatic his come-from-behind win had been. But drama is what we've all come to expect from Chris Leben, the kind of drama that has pulled audiences in since that first assault on Jason Thacker's bed — which, for the record, Leben maintains was only a spritzing.

Le, Cung

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 5/25/72

Debut: Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Gracie (3/10/06)

Career Record: 7-1

Notable Wins: Tony Fryklund (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Baroni); Frank Shamrock (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Le); Scott Smith (Strikeforce: Fedor vs. Werdum)

Notable Loss: Scott Smith (Strikeforce: Evolution)

In all of martial arts, there are plenty of great showmen and plenty of great fighters. There are few who are both. Most martial artists are either all for show — actors in the Wushu tradition like Jackie Chan or Jet Li — or they eschew that kind of style and flair to focus on practical techniques.

Cung Le is both, an actor and showman (even in the cage), and also one of the most skilled technicians in the world. When Le fights, it's like a real life movie fight scene. Graceful spinning kicks, powerful spinning back-fists, hard throws, and amazing suplexes: Le can do it all and combines the techniques into a beautiful ballet of violence.

Le was an All-American in **wrestling** at California's West Valley Junior College. He also studied tae kwon do and other striking arts, and found the opportunity to combine the two with the Chinese fighting art called san shou. Le's International Sport Karate Association san shou fights scored punches, kicks, and throws

equally. With his quickness and high level wrestling, Le was almost unbeatable in this style, racking up a 17-0 professional record.

Le was not only developing his techniques, like a lightning fast high kick and an impressive array of slams and suplexes; he was also becoming a star. In his hometown of San Jose, the Vietnamese-American was an icon to the huge immigrant population. When he began fighting MMA in 2006, a matchup with fellow hometown boy **Frank Shamrock** seemed inevitable.

Before he could count his money from a Shamrock matchup, Le had to earn it. San shou and MMA were similar, but there was one important difference.



In Their Own Words: Le on getting started in MMA and fighting a legend

"Actually it was Frank Shamrock's old trainer, and now my trainer, Javier Mendez. He talked me into doing MMA. Back in 2006 he said, 'The time is now, MMA's about to explode.' I said, 'Okay, I'll give it a shot.'

"Frank and I were on the same card in March two years ago and it was a sell-out. I guess there were over 18,000 that showed up. We're expecting another big show. Two years later, I'm just fortunate to have the chance to compete for a title and fight someone like Frank. It's only been two years for me in the MMA game, and I just feel like I came in at the right time. I was at the right place at the right time and have been blessed. Frank gave me the shot, and I'm grateful."

When the fight hit the ground in *san shou*, it was stood right back up. In MMA, Le would have to defend against submissions as well.

It was never an issue. Before the Shamrock fight, Le was carefully matched with fighters unlikely to challenge him on the ground. He either fought fellow strikers who were planning to fight him on their feet, or guys who wouldn't be able to take Le to the mat. He won five fights in a row and was ready to face the former **UFC** champion.

The two hometown boys drew a crowd of more than 13,000 and a gate of over \$1.1 million to San Jose's HP Pavilion. The fight was an explosive affair, fought almost entirely standing. Le defeated the legend when Shamrock had to quit after a series of Le high kicks broke his right wrist. Le was the **Strikeforce** middleweight champion and a legitimate star. He was also outgrowing MMA.

The star-making performance was Le's last MMA fight for some time. Already in his mid-30s, Le decided he would be better off focusing on acting opportunities. There his physical decline would be less noticeable and he would only be getting punched in the face if a stuntman made a mistake. Le was set to star in the upcoming *Tekken* movie as well as films with David Carradine and Dennis Quaid. It seems likely that Le's fights will now take place almost exclusively on the silver screen, as he looks close to becoming MMA's first breakout film star.

Leg locks

It's been a long, hard road back to respectability for leg locks. Although present in the *koryu* jiu-jitsu schools of feudal Japan, leg locks all but disappeared



from the day-to-day, living culture of **judo** when they were excluded from sparring and tournament competition over safety concerns, and instead confined to formal, rehearsed kata. **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** practitioners banned some particularly dangerous leg locks from all but the highest levels of competition, and even when permitted, a kind of gentleman's agreement discouraged their use, seeing them as cheap. There's a pedagogical reason jiu-jitsu players have often discouraged techniques that sacrificed position and could be attempted without working one's way methodically towards a superior position, given their rigorous belief in **positional hierarchy**, but however justified, the net result was a hole in the otherwise unassailable jiu-jitsu submission game. As **catch wrestling** disappeared, the only remaining discipline that both allowed and encouraged at least certain varieties of leg locks was **sambo**, an art that remains fairly obscure outside of Russia and the former Soviet Republic.

But the no-holds-barred ethos of early mixed martial arts brought about a renewed interest in this broad and versatile class of techniques. The influence of catch stylists Karl Gotch and Billy Robinson over young Japanese grapplers like **Masakatsu Funaki** and Satoru Sayama led to the extensive use of leg locks in both **Shooto** and **Pancrase**. Think of early Pancrase, and surely one of the first

images to come to mind is a pair of fighters fumbling with each other's brightly colored boots, struggling to twist or extend the knee or the ankle just so.

Maybe they were looking for the heel hook, a dangerous twisting hold banned from sambo and much Brazilian Jiu-jitsu that can feel like nothing special one moment and leave you with a wrenched ankle, a ruined knee, or even on rare occasion a fractured shin the next. Or maybe it was an Achilles lock they were after: a straight ankle lock that exerts serious pressure as the Achilles tendon is stretched over the attacker's forearm. Maybe a toe hold, a twisting ankle lock that uses the double-wrist or figure-four grip, like a **Kimura** or **Americana**. The knee bar was a popular option, too, hyperextending the knee with the same basic principles that underlie the jujigatame **arm bar**.

In both Pancrase and the early **UFC**, **Ken Shamrock** did as much as anyone to demonstrate the effectiveness of the leg lock. Heel hook, knee bar, Achilles lock — Shamrock could do it all, leaving some particularly hopeful old fans liking Shamrock's chances against any modern fighter we haven't yet seen defend against the leg lock. Such is the aura Shamrock created around these techniques that had all but faded away. It's no surprise, then, that when Shamrock left MMA for an extended stay in the World Wrestling Federation, his signature submission move was an ankle lock — a toe hold, to be exact.

Leopoldo, Kimo

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 235 lbs

Born: 1/4/68

Debut: UFC 3 (9/9/94)

Career Record: 10-7-1

Notable Wins: Patrick Smith (K-1 Legend 94, UFCF 1); Kazushi Sakuraba (Shoot Boxing S Cup 96); Tank Abbott (UFC 43)

Notable Losses: Royce Gracie (UFC 3); Ken Shamrock (UFC 8, UFC 48); Wes Sims (Extreme Wars 5)

Rumors of Kimo's demise have been greatly exaggerated. Or so Kimo claimed at a July 2009 press conference after a thread started by Beau "OMA" Taylor as a prank on **The Underground** spiraled out of control. All of a sudden, legitimate media sources were claiming that the **UFC** veteran had indeed passed away of heart attack at the age of 41 while vacationing in Costa Rica. His friends and family, who tried but failed to contact him, were understandably shocked and concerned. As was Kimo himself, who, as it turned out, was not so much dead as sleeping one off at a friend's place in Orange County.

It was a strange return to the spotlight for the man we first met at UFC 3 as the odd protégé of man-of-faith/alleged-rapist Joe Son. Kimo, known by

that name alone, carried a giant wooden cross to the ring as part of their tandem gimmick as religious warriors. He gave two-time defending tournament champion **Royce Gracie** all he could handle in their brief match. Although Gracie got the win by **arm bar** in fewer than five minutes, the physically imposing Kimo bullied Gracie around the ring in a way we hadn't seen before, and left Gracie exhausted and unable to continue into the next round.

Although Kimo stayed relatively active over the course of his 12-year career, he never really equaled the excitement of that first performance. Sure, there were wins over **Patrick Smith** and **Paul Varelans**, an **arm triangle** that stopped **Tank Abbott**, and another that apparently got the best of **Kazushi Sakuraba** in a match that may not have been entirely on the up-and-up. There were losses to **Ken Shamrock**, the entertaining **Ikuhisa Minowa**, and the game **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka**. And then there was the draw — *that* draw — against **Dan Severn** in an incredibly uneventful match even by the low standards of early **Pride**. But for Kimo, for his place in the memory of the sport, it's all about that first night, that first fight. Kimo was the first fighter to make Royce Gracie seem almost beatable.



Lesnar, Brock

Nickname: The Next Big Thing

Weight: 280 lbs

Debut: Dynamite!! USA (6/2/07)

Notable Wins: Heath Herring (UFC 87); Randy Couture (UFC 91); Frank Mir (UFC 100); Shane Carwin (UFC 116)

Notable Loss: Frank Mir (UFC 81)

Height: 6'3"

Born: 7/12/77

Career Record: 5-1

Pro wrestling fans knew Brock Lesnar was tough long before he ever entered the Octagon to wreak havoc in the **UFC**. Sure, he looked tough, but it was more than that. A lot of wrestlers look like a million bucks but can't pull the tough guy act off when it matters. Lesnar though, he was tough. No one who had seen *Wrestlemania XIX* could ever doubt that.

Lesnar was wrestling Kurt Angle — like Brock a former amateur standout — in the biggest match of either man's career. To make it special, Lesnar was going to attempt a move that he hadn't tried since he was first breaking into the wrestling business, a move he had never done on **WWE** television. He dragged his massive body, all six feet three inches, every one of his 300 pounds to the top rope. And then he jumped, or rather did an inverted flip, a move wrestling fans know as the shooting star press.

It's normally the domain of the cruiserweights, little guys known more for their acrobatics than their musculature. That's what was going to make it so impressive when Lesnar pulled it off to steal the show on the biggest card of the year. Only there was a problem. Lesnar didn't make it all the way around to land safely on Angle. In fact, he didn't even come close. He landed square on his face, all 300 pounds supported by only his head and neck. And he lived. Not only lived, but he got up in a concussed state and finished the match. Now that's tough.

Brock Lesnar has always been tough. He grew up in Webster, South Dakota, home to fewer than 2,000 people. Lesnar worked on his family's dairy farm, struggling to make ends meet in a dead-end town on the Minnesota border. In a state full of farm boy wrestlers, Brock was one of the very best. But he never won a high school championship, a failure that drove him to continue **wrestling**, to continue working hard. At Bismarck College in North Dakota, Lesnar became a star, winning the Junior College National Championship in 1998. He finished his two years there with a 56–3 record. Coaches from every Big Ten school called, but in the end, there was only one choice that made sense: the University of Minnesota.

It was obvious by this point that Lesnar had presence, that special kind of charisma that only the rare athlete possesses. When Brock Lesnar walked into a NCAA wrestling meet, heads turned. The man is just a physical freak — especially in the world of college wrestling, where bodies are more functional than sculpted. He was big, strong, cocky, and damn good. Lesnar won the Big Ten title and was the runner-up at Nationals, losing to Cal-State Bakersfield's Stephen Neal, the best wrestler in the country, 3–2.

Lesnar's loss burned inside all summer long. He didn't just lose the national championship for himself; his loss cost the team a title, too. That wasn't

something that sat well with the ultra-competitive Lesnar. He wouldn't be denied the second time around, winning the national championship in 2000, finishing his NCAA career with a record of 106–5.

At 23, Lesnar had a lot of choices. He could stick around the amateur wrestling game, taking a stab at the 2004 Olympics. He could try his hand at MMA, a sport that suited his skills, but was struggling to survive political and social pressures that had driven the entire industry underground. Or, he could take a guaranteed six-figure contract to join Vince McMahon's traveling professional wrestling circus. To a poor kid from South Dakota, that choice seemed easy.

As with almost everything else in his life, Lesnar was a natural at pro wrestling. He became not just a good wrestler, but a great one. He had the size the WWE loved, the physical skills to pick up the complicated match routines, and a cocky persona that made him the perfect villain. But the wrestler's life isn't for everyone. It is a long grind, filled with constant travel and stress. To Lesnar, even the million-dollar salary couldn't make up for the quality of life. Lesnar hated the dysfunctional atmosphere, hated seeing the zombie-like wrestlers and what they had to do to get ready for matches night after night. And he didn't want to get older and wonder if he could have made it as a professional athlete.

He tried out for the NFL's Minnesota Vikings, showing the athletic talent but not the football skill to make it. Only after trying professional football did Lesnar turn his attention to the sport of MMA.

As good as he was in the professional wrestling ring, Lesnar was even better in the cage. He seemed born to be a fighter. Like some of the most successful amateurs to make the jump from college to MMA, Lesnar wasn't a great technician. Like former UFC champion **Mark Coleman**, Lesnar was a power wrestler, a bruiser with a real mean streak.

"I'm an amateur wrestler first of all, pro wrestler second. There was a little pressure, but my amateur wrestling is who I am and I'm going to evolve into a fighter," Lesnar said. "Unfortunately I have this black cloud over my head because I was a pro wrestler. It just goes to show that even though pro wrestling is a scripted sport it is entertainment; this is entertainment, but it's real when I get in the ring."

After beating a warm-up opponent name **Min-Soo Kim** at K-1's Dynamite show at the L.A. Coliseum, Lesnar was ready for the big time. **Dana White** announced his coup to the world at UFC 77. Brock would be thrown immediately into the deep end, to either sink or swim amongst the world's

best. His first opponent would be a former world champion, the equally brash **Frank Mir**.

Among MMA fans, Lesnar was immediately a divisive figure. Wrestling fans were excited by his signing, knowing that his amateur skills, physical superiority, and pro wrestling persona would combine to provide plenty of entertainment in the cage. Hard-core MMA fans were furious, uncomfortable with the idea of a “fake” wrestler bringing his goofy antics into their pristine sport.

His debut was all you could ask for. Lesnar exploded across the cage like an angry gorilla, dropping Mir with a punch and nearly finishing him on the ground. Lesnar was a giant and scarily fast. Everything about him was big, from his oversized personality to the giant phallic sword tattooed on his chest. Even his hands were big, so big the UFC had to create a 4XL glove just to protect them.

Lesnar was bigger, possibly more skilled, and much meaner than Mir. In the end it wasn't Mir; it was Brock's own enthusiasm that got the best of him. Mir caught him with a **leg lock** and Lesnar was forced to tap. Even in defeat, even with a fight that was barely a minute long, Lesnar was clearly a future star in the sport.

White and the UFC could smell money and wanted to be sure Lesnar didn't lose two in a row. His second opponent was supposed to be the ancient Coleman, an older, smaller version of Lesnar who was well past his fighting prime. When Coleman dropped out, they went instead with “Texas Crazy Horse” **Heath Herring**. Herring was a tough veteran fighter, but one whose weaknesses corresponded nicely with Lesnar's strengths. As expected, Lesnar took him down and rode him like a bucking bronco for three rounds.

With just one win to his name in the UFC, Lesnar was immediately fast-tracked into a title shot. Brock overwhelmed a returning **Randy Couture** to win the UFC title in just his fourth professional fight. Couture, twice a heavyweight champion and a three-time light heavyweight titleholder, was simply outsized. The monstrous new champion dwarfed Couture, and there was only so much Couture could do to combat Lesnar's 60 extra pounds. “Those are some big-ass ham hocks coming at you,” Couture said after the fight.

The win established Lesnar as the promotion's biggest star. For the third time in a row, a show he headlined topped 600,000 pay-per-view buys, with the Couture fight approaching a million purchases. Lesnar was now the champion, but not an undisputed one. Couture had been involved in a contract dispute for almost a year and the company had crowned an interim champion, a title that was held by Lesnar's old nemesis, Frank Mir.

Mir had been very vocal about his win, refusing to give Brock credit and dismissing his chances in a rematch, scheduled for the biggest show in the company's history, UFC 100. The heat between the two men simmered for months, exploding in the cage at UFC 100. This time, with another year and a half of submission defense under his belt, Lesnar controlled his opponent, refusing to lose his composure or his cool. He saved that until after his win in the second round.

An angry Lesnar stood over his vanquished opponent, not to offer a hug or a word of encouragement like most fighters, but to talk trash. He flipped the bird to the booing crowd, insulted one of the UFC's biggest corporate sponsors, and told the world he was going home to have sex with his wife. Depending on your point of view, the display was either repulsive and repugnant or amazingly awesome. There was no middle ground.

That's exactly what the UFC is counting on. Love him or hate him, people can't take their eyes off Brock Lesnar. The UFC 100 buyrate was the biggest in MMA history, topping 1.6 million buys. It was a record-setting performance, one the UFC hoped Lesnar could duplicate for years to come.

In October, 2009, disaster struck. Lesnar, feeling ill while training to meet **Shane Carwin** at UFC 106, was forced to pull out of the fight. Looking to unwind and recover, he journeyed to Canada for a relaxing weekend of hunting and hanging out. Then his body collapsed. Stuck in a Canadian hospital he referred to as "third world," Lesnar's wife, Rena, drove like a bandit for the United States and eventually Brock checked into Med Center One in Bismark, South Dakota. UFC officials sent the company jet to fly him to the Mayo Clinic.

From there, speculation ran wild: Lesnar was said to have everything from mononucleosis to cancer. Dana White would only confirm that he didn't have "AIDS or anything like that." Eventually the champion was diagnosed with a potentially career-ending ailment called diverticulitis. Surgery was scheduled and it looked like Lesnar's hiatus could become retirement. But, in what Lesnar described as a "medical miracle," surgery wasn't necessary. His body actually healed itself and the UFC heavyweight champion was ready to hit both the gym and the cage.

His first opponent would be Carwin, who, while waiting for Brock to recover, beat Lesnar's nemesis Frank Mir to become the interim heavyweight champion. Carwin was almost as big as Brock and had a respectable, if somewhat less distinguished, wrestling pedigree. The two argued back and forth about who was the best wrestler, but the point was moot.

Carwin, known for his punching power, didn't have to wrestle Brock to the

ground — he knocked him down instead with battering blows. On top, Carwin landed dozens of hard punches. It seemed Lesnar was finished, but every time referee Josh Rosenthal asked Lesnar to defend himself, the champion responded. He weathered the storm and at the midway point of the first round Carwin was spent.

As the second round opened, Carwin was practically immobile. Lesnar immediately took him to the mat, passed his guard, and submitted him with an **arm triangle**. Lesnar, for the first time, looked human. After the fight, there were none of his usual hysterics. Instead, Lesnar took the microphone to reflect on the most trying year of his life.

“I am blessed by God,” he said.

Lewis, John

Height: 6'

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 7/16/69

Debut: UFCF 1 (9/8/95)

Career Record: 3-4-3

Notable Losses: Kenny Monday (EF 4); Rumina Sato (Vale Tudo Japan 97); Jens Pulver (UFC 28)

John Lewis has just three wins in ten career fights, but that’s a little deceptive. From 1995 to 1997, Lewis would have been on plenty of people’s top ten pound-for-pound fighter lists. His wins aren’t really very impressive. He beat Jim Treachout and other fighters forgotten to history. But his draws — now that was where he shined.

Lewis was the first fighter in modern MMA to shatter the Gracie myth. He didn’t just take Carlson Gracie Jr. to a draw over 20 minutes at the first **Extreme Fighting** show in 1995 — if there had been judges, he would have won the fight. The same applies to Japanese legend **Rumina Sato**. Sato was already more myth than man when the two fought at **Vale Tudo Japan** 1996, but Lewis was too much for him that night. It is a draw in the record book, but sometimes the record book lies.

Of course, even if Lewis had never fought, his presence would still have forever altered the course of MMA history. Lewis has done it all in his 14 years in the sport. He’s been a fighter, a trainer, a promoter (**World Fighting Alliance**), and an agent. Lewis’s name comes up everywhere you turn. He’s like the MMA Kevin Bacon: anyone can be connected to him in just a few moves. Extreme Fighting founder **John Perretti**? Lewis trained with him under “Judo” **Gene LeBell**. **UFC** President **Dana White**? Lewis introduced him to his best MMA clients, **Chuck Liddell** and **Tito Ortiz**, when White was still a manager. **UFC** own-

In Their Own Words: John Lewis on fighting to a draw

"I loved fighting in Japan because the fans were very loyal. They just want to see a good fighter who's willing to fight hard. That's all they care about. Rumina was the man over there and I wasn't sure I was good enough. I was not too confident; I was just a young kid at the time. I was honored to fight him, because he was my favorite fighter. Even afterward, he was one of my favorite fighters forever because he is such a free-willed fighter. He did whatever he wanted to do. I beat him, but it was called a draw. If you look at my record, people think you were a certain kind of fighter because of all the draws. In those days they didn't have judges. You either knocked him out, submitted him, or they called it a draw – no matter how clearly you were winning. The Carlson Gracie Jr. fight, I dominated that fight. The Sato fight, the Johil de Oliveira fight, those were all considered draws. But I dominated those fights."

ers Frank and Lorenzo **Fertitta**? Lewis taught the competitive brothers jiu-jitsu for years after they took an interest in the fledgling sport of MMA.

Everywhere you look, Lewis is there. And the sport is better for it.

Liddell, Chuck

Nickname: The Iceman

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 12/17/69

Debut: UFC 17 (5/15/98)

Career Record: 21-8

Notable Wins: Jeff Monson (UFC 29); Kevin Randleman (UFC 31); Guy Mezger (Pride 14); Murilo Bustamante (UFC 33); Vitor Belfort (UFC 37.5); Renato Sobral (UFC 40, UFC 62); Tito Ortiz (UFC 47, UFC 66); Randy Couture (UFC 52, UFC 57); Jeremy Horn (UFC 54); Wanderlei Silva (UFC 79)

Notable Losses: Jeremy Horn (UFC 19); Randy Couture (UFC 43); Quinton Jackson (Pride Final Conflict 2003, UFC 71); Keith Jardine (UFC 76); Rashad Evans (UFC 78); Mauricio Rua (UFC 97); Rich Franklin (UFC 115)

With appearances on *Dancing with the Stars* and *The Simpsons* to add to his *ESPN: The Magazine* cover story and *Entourage* cameo, **UFC** Hall of Fame member Chuck Liddell remains the most visible athlete in the sport even as he lingers in a company-mandated state of pseudo-retirement. The stars aligned for "The Iceman," who finally captured his long-overdue **UFC** light heavyweight championship just as the company entered an unprecedented level of popularity on the strength of the massive success of *The Ultimate Fighter*



reality series. It couldn't have happened to a more deserving fighter. Ever since his debut in an unaired alternate bout way back at UFC 17 at the Mobile, Alabama, Civic Center, Liddell has taken on all comers with his wide open, crowd-pleasing style.

It takes the edge off Liddell's tattooed skull, at least a little, to learn that the kanji running down the left side of his head reads, "place of peace and prosperity." That's the literal translation of the **karate** style he began training in as a child, Koei-Kan. But the mohawk — that's something he did with some buddies before taking in a Slayer concert. These two seemingly trivial details actually give you the broad outline of Chuck Liddell, a soft-spoken, easy-going man drawn to what can seem like extraordinary violence.

Before embarking on his pro career, Liddell wrestled at Division I California Polytechnic State University while he earned a degree in business and accounting. Then, in a scene that sounds like something out of the movies, Liddell presented himself at the age of 21 at The Pit, John Hackleman's Hawaiian Kempo school, to see if the master would train him. The master and the would-be student boxed for 19 minutes, and Hackleman asked if Liddell would be back the next day. Liddell, who had driven out on

a 250cc Honda motorcycle in the rain, said he would. Hackleman tossed him the keys to his truck. It was the beginning of a partnership that has lasted to this day. From Liddell's curtain-jerking bout before a scattered crowd in Mobile to his main event fights in Vegas, John Hackleman has been a fixture in his man's corner.

Liddell came out of the gate strong, with only a single loss — by **triangle choke** to submission expert **Jeremy Horn** — against wins over such solid competition as **Jeff Monson**, former UFC heavyweight champion **Kevin Randleman**, **Guy Mezger**, **Murilo Bustamante**, **Vitor Belfort**, and **Renato Sobral**. It was more than enough to merit a light heavyweight title shot against reigning champion **Tito Ortiz**, but Ortiz wouldn't take the fight, arguing that fighting a friend wasn't worth what little the UFC was offering for the match. Liddell's position was that they were never that close, and the money was fine. An interim championship bout was announced, with Liddell taking on **Randy Couture**, who'd been stopped in his last two fights at heavyweight and was willing to move down to light heavyweight to help the company out of a fix. In a fight Liddell was supposed to win easily, Couture out-boxed the great knockout artist, and took him down almost at will. Once Couture established a dominant position on the ground, Liddell was out of options. He didn't make it out of the second round.

Coming off that loss, Liddell was entered in the 2003 **Pride** middleweight (205 pounds) Grand Prix as a representative of the UFC. In the opening moments of his quarter-final bout against **Alistair Overeem**, Liddell took full advantage of the more liberal Pride rules, and delivered repeated knees to the head of his downed opponent. When Overeem regained his feet, he put Liddell on his heels until the counter-puncher could find his rhythm. Once he found it, it was all over, as Liddell connected with his trademark overhand right, and finished Overeem with a flurry of wide looping hooks. Liddell secured himself a spot in the stacked tournament's final four alongside **Wanderlei Silva**, **Hidehiko Yoshida**, and his semi-final opponent, **Quinton Jackson**. Jackson, much like Couture, got the best of Liddell with straight punches and strong takedowns. All of a sudden Liddell, who had lost only once in his first four years in the sport, had been pounded out twice in four months.

Clearly, he'd had enough of it. When he returned to the UFC to finally face Ortiz — they had apparently decided they weren't such dear friends after all — Liddell fought like a man possessed. With first-rate takedown defense and his strange, looping punches thrown from all kinds of unusual angles, he stopped Ortiz in the second. **Vernon White** didn't last a round. And then, after a season-long build on *The Ultimate Fighter*, the UFC's Hail Mary shot at cultural

relevance and profitability, Liddell met Couture in an enormously anticipated rematch for the title. This time, everything went according to plan. Liddell knocked the veteran grappler out in minutes to finally become UFC light heavyweight champion just as the company reached a new high. The outcome, decisive as it was, was not entirely without controversy: before he put Couture on his back, he'd clearly poked him in the eye. Although the eye-poke was ruled inadvertent, it's undeniable that it influenced the outcome of the fight — and it wasn't the last time Liddell would be seen pawing at his opponent's eyes.

In his first title defense, Liddell looked to avenge his loss to the workmanlike Jeremy Horn, a man with over 90 professional fights at the time. Although Horn had been out of the spotlight for years, competing in smaller organizations, he fought constantly. A battle-tested submission artist, Horn boldly declared that he was willing to stand and trade punches with Liddell this time around. Although this sounded foolhardy, it was also his only real option: there was no way Horn, with his indifferent takedowns, was going to be able to take the fight to the mat against the greatest **sprawl and brawl** fighter in the sport. Horn was game as always, and lasted longer than many expected, but couldn't continue past the fourth round when he admitted to the referee that he couldn't see.

The fight everyone wanted to see was next: the rubber match with Randy Couture. The first round was a classic that left Liddell cut over the eye and Couture with a broken nose. With two takedowns late, it looked like Couture might be able to implement the strategy that earned him the upset in their first meeting. But early in the second, Couture threw an awkward right hand that left him exposed, and Liddell countered with a right of his own that signaled the beginning of the end. Immediately after the bout, Couture announced a retirement that would last a little more than a year.

Liddell defended next against the streaking Sobral, looking to avenge a previous loss that ended with a highlight-reel head kick KO, the most impressive of Liddell's long career. This time Sobral fared no better: he was caught rushing in, and that was that. Tito Ortiz, a hot commodity again after drawing big audiences for two blowout wins over **Ken Shamrock**, presented no real threat to Liddell's title reign, but produced record-setting business when the two met for a second time. Ortiz was able to hang tough before ultimately succumbing to strikes late in the third. Liddell's first four title defenses couldn't have gone much more smoothly for the champ.

That would be the end of the line, however. When the UFC purchased the assets of the defunct **World Fighting Alliance**, it was a move designed to get Quinton Jackson into the UFC as soon as possible. After a tune-up fight

against Marvin Eastman, Jackson was thrust into a title shot even earlier than he would have preferred. But less than two minutes into the contest, Liddell threw the kind of sloppy body shot he's thrown countless times and gotten away with; this time, though, Jackson countered with a big right that ended the champ's night, his title reign, and, as it turned, his long run as a top-tier light heavyweight.

Regardless of what happened when they first met in the 2003 Grand Prix, Liddell's loss to Jackson the second time around was an upset. His loss to the tough but otherwise unremarkable **Keith Jardine**, though, was a *stunning* upset. Liddell had no answer for Jardine's awkward punches and steady stream of leg kicks. Something seemed wrong, and a solid performance in a long anticipated and genuinely thrilling bout against Wanderlei Silva wasn't enough to completely dispel that notion. Back-to-back knockouts at the hands of **Rashad Evans** and **Mauricio Rua** weren't just surprising; they were worrying.

After the Rua loss, **Dana White** insisted that Liddell was done. He wasn't willing to watch his personal friend and his company's once great champion put his health on the line against younger, faster competition once it was clear Liddell had lost a step at the age of 39. The worry is that it's more than just a step: go to YouTube and call up a Chuck Liddell interview from early in his career. Compare it with a clip from the last few years. The deterioration in Liddell's speech is noticeable. Given the ease with which he's been knocked out in his most recent fights, you can't help but wonder how much damage has been done over the course of a career spent fighting exactly the style fans want to see: wide open, full tilt. Then there's the infamous *Good Morning Texas* interview, where Liddell appeared on a morning talk show almost completely incoherent. The official story is that Liddle was exhausted, sick with pneumonia, and under the influence of sedatives he'd taken only hours before to help him sleep. Given Liddell's reputation as a man who enjoys the nightlife more than most, and the many pitfalls that await retired fighters looking for ways to replace the highs of competition, let's hope Liddell finds a place of peace and prosperity in a long, healthy retirement.

Lindland, Matt

Nickname: The Law

Height: 6'

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 5/17/70

Debut: WFF (2/14/97)

Career Record: 22-7

Notable Wins: Ricardo Almeida (UFC 31); Phil Baroni (UFC 34, UFC 41); Pat Miletich (UFC 36); Jeremy Horn (IFL: Portland); Carlos Newton (IFL: Houston)



Notable Losses: Murilo Bustamante (UFC 37); David Terrell (UFC 49); Quinton Jackson (WFA: King of the Streets); Fedor Emelianenko (BodogFight: Clash of Nations); Vitor Belfort (Affliction: Day of Reckoning); Ronaldo de Souza (Strikeforce: Evolution)

“The Law.” It’s a pretty good nickname. The story behind it is even better. Matt Lindland was one of the best Greco-Roman wrestlers in the world when he was upset by Keith Sieracki at the 2000 U.S. Olympic trials. After winning three consecutive U.S. championships, Lindland had seemingly lost his opportunity to represent America in the Olympic Games. But not so fast: Lindland protested the loss, saying Sieracki had tripped him illegally to earn the victory. A rematch was ordered and Lindland dominated, winning 8–0. And then the battle, previously played out on the mats, was suddenly being contested in the courts. The case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court. Less than a month before the Games began, the case was being combated in court. In the end, Lindland was on the team, earning a silver medal in Sydney. Sieracki was the first to fight the Law; the Law won.

Lindland, like many collegiate wrestlers, had flirted with MMA a little before the Olympic Games. Silver medal in hand, he was ready to move directly

into the big time, making his **UFC** debut in Japan at **UFC 29**, beating pro wrestler **Yoji Anjo** in the first round. Lindland formed one of the most respected and successful fight teams of all time, **Team Quest**, with fellow Greco-Roman wrestling stars **Randy Couture** and **Dan Henderson**.

He was a quick learner, soaking in information from his more experienced teammates, enough to run through the **UFC**'s middleweight division. He wasn't given any easy marks either, taking on submission ace Ricardo Almeida, brawler **Phil Baroni**, and the legendary **Pat Miletich**. Although this wouldn't always be the case, the **UFC** loved Lindland in these early years of his career. The promotion was looking to prove to critics that it was more than a collection of bikers and bar-room brawlers. Lindland's college education and Olympic pedigree lent the promotion immediate credibility.

He won his first seven fights to earn a title shot against jiu-jitsu standout **Murilo Bustamante**. Bustamante beat Lindland not once, but twice. Early in the fight he caught the **Olympian** in an **arm bar**. It looked like Lindland tapped and referee "Big" **John McCarthy** called a halt to the fight. Lindland insisted he hadn't tapped, despite what seemed to be compelling visual evidence, and McCarthy inexplicably restarted the fight. It made little difference as Bustamante submitted him with a **guillotine choke** in the third round. Even in the **UFC**, Lindland couldn't escape controversy.

He was never again able to earn a **UFC** title shot, despite six more wins in the promotion. Just when things seemed to be heading in that direction, the train would fall off the tracks. Against tough Hawaiian Falaniko Vitale, Lindland knocked himself out with an errant Greco-Roman throw. When he got back on track with two wins, David Terrell upset him at **UFC 49** with a blistering left hand. And then, after two more wins, he was gone.

After a win against journeyman Joe Doerkson at **UFC 54**, Lindland was unexpectedly bounced from the promotion. Prior to the weigh-ins, Lindland and the other fighters were told that several controversial sponsors had been banned from the show. Lindland wore a T-shirt for Sportsbook.com that was specifically prohibited. He and Team Quest partner Randy Couture had just signed a six-figure deal with the bookmaker and thought they could get away with wearing the shirt anyway. Couture might have been able to. Lindland was not Couture — he was fired.

Conspiracy theorists don't believe that the number one contender for the **UFC**'s middleweight crown was let go over a T-shirt dispute. "They had invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in [**UFC** champion] **Rich Franklin**, bringing in **Ken Shamrock** to fight him," Lindland said. "They knew I would beat Franklin. Do you think I was fired over a T-shirt?"

It was his final fight for the UFC. They were never able to reconcile their differences and Lindland began his tour of the world's second-rate promotions. His next nine fights were contested for seven different organizations, and finding big fights against fellow 185-pound fighters was difficult, making it necessary for Lindland to step up against bigger men. He lost to future UFC light heavyweight champion **Quinton Jackson** in a great fight for the WFA and gave the best heavyweight in the world, **Fedor Emelianenko**, a scare before losing to an arm bar for BodogFight.

His luck was little better in politics. Lindland failed in his bid to win a seat in the Oregon State House of Representatives, losing to Democrat Suzanne VanOrman. His career in MMA became a campaign issue. VanOrman ran attack ads criticizing Lindland's "brutal fights" that stated, "I'll stay focused on the fights that really matter for our families."

With a UFC return as far away as ever, Lindland signed a three-fight contract with **Strikeforce** in April 2009. With potential opponents like **Jason Miller**, **Jake Shields**, and **Robbie Lawler**, the end of Lindland's career is stacking up to be just as interesting as the beginning.

Lion's Den

Ken Shamrock's Lion's Den was famous for its grueling physical initiation. Fighting was a tough business; fighting daily through the hard-core training at the Den even tougher. Shamrock was looking for people who wouldn't quit, who would persevere through the pain, reach their limits, then keep going.

Candidates for the elite team would start with 500 hindu squats, 200 pushups, and 200 sit-ups. Then it got interesting. There were runs with a man on your back, both sprints and for distance. You hit the bleachers, running steps in the hot California sun. When you were as exhausted as you've ever been in your life, they took you to the gym. Barely able to move, prospective students would spar with Shamrock or one of his protégés for up to an hour.

It was no easy thing, joining the Lion's Den. And yet, after going through this ordeal, most quit soon after. People who were tough enough to meet this challenge would give up on their dream and slink away in the middle of the night. Because the real challenge of the Lion's Den was mental, never physical.

"It was all mental," Lion's Den lightweight Mikey Burnett said. "He would come in in the morning, sometimes 4:30 or 5:00, and wake you up by whispering, 'I'm going to kill you tonight.' And sometimes he would show up that night and tear into you and sometimes he would show up and not even look at you. He just totally screwed with your head until you got to the point [where] there was no fear of death."

The actual training in the Lion's Den was somewhat primitive. The fighters were ahead of the curve thanks to Shamrock's submission training in **Pancrase**, but Shamrock had trouble explaining what he learned. Most often the instruction consisted of Ken telling guys to "hook it up," followed by hard-core sparring for a half an hour. No one did anything at half speed. They sparred like they fought: bare-knuckled and hard.

As tough as the gym was, the Fighter's House was often an even harder road for fighters to walk. New members started as "young boys." Like the Japanese system Shamrock had been trained in, these were whipping boys. They cleaned the gym, cleaned the house, did the dishes, and prepared the meals. They were also victims of physical and mental abuse. Established fighters like **Frank Shamrock** or **Jerry**

Bohlander would sneak up on a victim, choke him into unconsciousness, and then wake him up with a gun in his face, threatening death if he let himself be taken unawares again.

It was hazing, pure and simple, and for many it was too much. Plenty of fighters snuck out of the house, never to return. The fighters that remained, after all this, were the cream of the crop. It was an MMA all-star team, the first world-class fight team, leading the way for future superstar teams like **Team Quest**, Miletich Fighting Systems, and Jackson's Mixed Martial Arts. Shamrock himself was the King of Pancrase and **UFC** Superfight Champion. Bohlander was the **UFC 12** tournament winner. **Guy Mezger** was the **UFC 13** winner and King of Pancrase. Ken's adopted brother Frank Shamrock was the King of Pancrase and the **UFC** middleweight (now light heavyweight) champion.



In Their Own Words: Scott Bessac on training at the Lion's Den

"Back then, Ken didn't know any better and I certainly didn't know any better. I was just a fighter out on the streets. We did sparring with no pads. With just kempo gloves and no shin protection. It wasn't until **Maurice Smith** talked to us one day in Japan. 'What do you mean you don't spar with equipment?' I said, 'No, we spar shin to shin.' And that was like two years later, after we'd been doing it for years. We used to kick shin to shin. It was basically just Ken beating the hell out of us. One, we were all young and stupid. And two, he had been trained by the Japanese in submission. And they whooped the hell out of him. They worked him hard and beat the heck out of him. They would lock him in submissions until he was black and blue. That was the only way he knew to pass that on. So that's what he did to me. And it's what I did to everyone else. And when **Vernon White** came in, that's what he did to Vernon. So, that's what Vernon did to everyone else. It just went down the line that way."

Despite this success, by the end of the 1990s, the Lion's Den had all but collapsed. The energy once focused on feuding with **Tito Ortiz** or **Tank Abbott** was turned inward on each other. Ken Shamrock left MMA for the world of **professional wrestling**. His relationship with Pancrase had fallen apart and the UFC simply couldn't afford to pay him anymore. That left Frank Shamrock in charge, and the two men didn't see eye to eye. Frank wanted to focus on technique and cardiovascular training, while Ken continued to see toughness as the key to fighter success. One blowup between the two ended with a computer monitor flying through the air at Frank, who left, never to return.

Today the Lion's Den continues to churn out fighters at several locations throughout California and the southwest. It's no longer an elite team, having burned bright and burned out.

"You can sprint for a certain amount of time," Burnett said. "But you can't sprint forever."

Lombard, Hector

Nickname: Shango

Weight: 185 lbs

Debut: Spartan Reality Fight 11 (9/26/04)

Notable Win: Jared Hess (Bellator 12)

Notable Losses: Akihiro Gono (Pride Bushido 11); Gegard Mousasi (Pride Bushido 13)

Height: 5'9"

Born: 2/2/78

Career Record: 26-2-1

Cuban **judo** champion and 2000 **Olympian** Hector Lombard was about to make his American MMA debut against fellow judo player **Karo Parisyan** at **UFC 78**. There was just one hitch: Lombard, though training and fighting out of Melbourne, Australia, held only a Cuban passport and was denied a **P1** visa to work in the U.S. He'd made appearances in **Pride**, gassing out and coming up short in Bushido bouts against **Akihiro Gono** and Gegard Mousasi, but this was Lombard's real shot at the big time: a fight against a perennial welterweight contender in the sport's premier organization. But the match was scrapped, and the explosive Lombard went back to grinding it out in Sydney's unimaginatively named Cage Fighting Championship. In 2008, with his papers in order, Lombard joined **American Top Team** in Coconut Creek, Florida, and was crowned the nascent **Bellator** promotion's middleweight champion a year later with three dominant **TKO** tournament wins. Another **UFC** opportunity seems inevitable.

Luta Livre

Every great hero needs a foil. For **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** masters, that foil was Luta Livre, translated from Portuguese as "free fighting." Although many people incorrectly suggest Luta Livre is simply a jiu-jitsu offshoot without the **gi**, its origin is actually in freestyle and **catch wrestling**.

The identity of the wrestler who brought this grappling art to Brazil has been lost to history, but what we now call submission wrestling began cropping up in Brazil in the late 1920s. The local leader of the movement was Euclides "Tatu" Hatem, a prototypical wrestler: short and thick and deadly on the mat. He is credited with turning a martial art into a sport, much the way the Gracies created a sporting version of jiu-jitsu years later. Hatem called these grappling competitions Luta Livre Esportivo.

Hatem and his students and training partners were excellent grapplers. Although many of the holds were the same techniques found in **judo** (and thus in the judo offshoot known as **Gracie Jiu-jitsu**) there was one important difference. Luta Livre did not use the **gi**, believing that reliance on an instrument like that would make a fighter less effective in real life situations and confrontations.

For many years, Gracie Jiu-jitsu was a closed art, a carefully guarded set of techniques passed on only to those willing to pay. Luta Livre didn't have these associated costs. While jiu-jitsu attracted the wealthy and elite, many of Brazil's working class poor gravitated to Luta Livre where they didn't have to pay for lessons or a **gi**.

Hatem did more than teach and train. He put his teaching to the test, winning many challenge matches including a fight in the 1940s with George Gracie, believed by many to be the most physically dominant of the Gracie

brothers. Just as they refused to meet Brazil's top judoka Robert Mehdi, the Gracies never again challenged Hatem, perhaps fearing the potential effect of a loss on their burgeoning reputation.

Luta Livre continued developing side by side with jiu-jitsu over the years in Brazil. There were many challenges and plenty of dojo fights, with jiu-jitsu generally getting the better of things. Luta Livre did earn one enormous victory when Euclides Pereira beat **Carlson Gracie** in 1968 in an extremely controversial fight. To his dying day, Carlson was furious about what he felt was a victory stolen from him by corrupt judges. Others who were there say Pereira was the better man that day. It was Gracie's only loss and established Pereira as a legend in his own time. He and Roberto Leitaó, a university professor who wrote copiously about the martial arts and grappling, led the way for Luta Livre in the 1970s.

Only in the 1980s did the rivalry between Luta Livre and jiu-jitsu become a full-blown feud. A new generation of ultra-aggressive Gracie men was on the scene, led first by Rolls Gracie and later by **Rickson Gracie**. They were met head-on by the toughest Luta Livre fighters — men like **Eugenio Tadeu** and Hugo Duarte, who refused to back down from any challenge. The fights between the two factions couldn't be contained in a dojo or gym. They spread from the gym to the street, and in several memorable cases, to the beach.

The feud culminated, it seemed, at Desafio 91, a team challenge pitting three jiu-jitsu players against three of Luta Livre's best (Tadeu, Denilson Maia, and Marcelo Mendes). Carlson Gracie led the way for jiu-jitsu, bringing in some of his best students, including Wallid Ismail, Fabio Gurgel, and **Murilo Bustamante**. Jiu-jitsu carried the day, taking three of three challenge matches.

Soon after, many of the Gracies moved to America and the MMA boom began in 1993 with the creation of the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**. Where jiu-jitsu traveled, it seemed Luta Livre soon followed. Luta Livre star **Marco Ruas** won the tournament at UFC 7 and dazzled the world with his exciting combination of striking technique and submission grappling. Tadeu, Duarte, and other top Luta Livre stars soon made their way into modern MMA, with varying degrees of success.

The final curtain for the Luta Livre/jiu-jitsu feud fell at the ill-fated Pentagon Combat show in 1997. **Renzo Gracie** represented jiu-jitsu in the main event, while Tadeu flew the banner for Luta Livre. The two had a remarkable back-and-forth fight with a raucous crowd edging ever closer to the cage. Soon, the lights went out in the building and all hell broke loose. The riot set MMA in Brazil back years, and the feud between the two arts seemed to die along with the sport they had worked so hard to build.

Today, Luta Livre artists train jiu-jitsu. And jiu-jitsu players, who once refused to grapple without a gi, now practice no-gi grappling. The most common grappling tournaments in the world, including the famous Abu Dhabi Submission Grappling Championships (**ADCC**), are essentially the progeny of Luta Livre and jiu-jitsu, gi-less grappling borrowing heavily from sport jiu-jitsu scoring and rules. Like jiu-jitsu, Luta Livre has also spread worldwide, making notable headway in Germany, where no-gi grappling is widespread and growing.



Machida, Lyoto

Nickname: The Dragon

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 5/30/78

Debut: New Japan Pro Wrestling: Ultimate Crush (5/2/03)

Career Record: 16-1

Notable Wins: Stephan Bonnar (Jungle Fight 1); Rich Franklin (Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2003); B.J. Penn (Hero's 1); Vernon White (WFA: King of the Streets); Kazuhiro Nakamura (UFC 76); Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou (UFC 79); Tito Ortiz (UFC 84); Thiago Silva (UFC 94); Rashad Evans (UFC 98)

Notable Loss: Maurico Rua (UFC 113)

“**Karate** is back,” Lyoto Machida announced after he knocked **Rashad Evans** out cold in the second round of their **UFC** title fight. As he strapped the light heavyweight championship belt over his paper-thin **gi**, there could be no doubt. Machida, trained by his father Yoshizo in shotokan karate since the age of three, had overturned everything we thought we knew about mixed martial arts. “Ladies and gentlemen,” **Joe Rogan** said in an awed tone as the new champion fell to his knees in celebration, “Welcome to the Machida era.”

Karate, in short, wasn't supposed to work. Not in 2009. The failure of traditional karate stylists in the early days of the **UFC** was seen by many in the martial arts community as the end of the art as a relevant fighting system. The karate club might still be a good place to drop the kids off after school, let them burn off some energy and improve their fitness in an environment that emphasized focus, discipline, and self-control. For most practitioners, those have always been the real benefits of the martial arts anyway, and a good karate dojo still holds to those values. But traditional karate was thought to be incapable of turning out fighters that could compete in the full-contact free-for-all of modern mixed martial arts.

Enter “The Dragon.” Machida was by no means the first prominent mixed martial artist to hold rank in a traditional karate discipline, but he was the first

to look like a karate fighter in the cage, to move like one. Leaping in and out of striking range with his head back in an uncommonly upright posture, throwing kicks from unpredictable angles, and disguising foot sweeps behind straight punches, Machida is a Sonny Chiba movie brought to life. Although he began training in both sumo and **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** as a teen, his study of other styles has always been in the service of implementing his family's art. When Japanese **professional wrestling** legend **Antonio Inoki** took him under his wing, Machida added **Muay Thai** and **wrestling** to his repertoire. The end result of this extensive cross-training is a fighter who is versed in everything his opponents might throw at him — while his opponents have never seen anyone like Machida before.

The knock on Machida has always been his lack of aggression, his caution, his unwillingness to take a punch in order to land one. If you subscribe to the “stand and bang” ethos that dominates the sport, Lyoto Machida doesn't have anything to offer you. He's not going to plant his feet and throw power shots in the middle of the cage; he's going to move, and a lot of that movement is going to be backwards, slipping just out of range. You can call his conservative, counterstriking style elusive and intelligent or you can call it dull and cowardly — it's been called all of the above — but at this point there's no denying its effectiveness.

Machida has recently silenced many of his critics by winning the biggest fights of his career with huge knockouts rather than earning the methodical decision victorious that had become his trademark. When he knocked out Thiago Silva at UFC 94, it was Machida's first stoppage due to strikes since overwhelming **Rich Franklin** five years and ten fights earlier. In between, there was never any shortage of solid wins over the likes of **Kazuhiko Nakamura**, **Tito Ortiz**, and a 191-pound version of **B.J. Penn** — but finishes were few and far between. After his dramatic KO of the previously undefeated Rashad Evans to become light heavyweight champion, however, few people were talking about Machida's supposedly overcautious, timid approach. Instead, they wondered who, if anyone, had the stylistic answer for the unique problems Machida presented. They wondered just how long this karate fighter who had yet to lose a single round in seven UFC fights would stay on top.

The answer, when it came, came quickly: **Mauricio Rua**, after dropping a controversial decision to the karateka, threw caution to the wind in his next attempt on Machida's light-heavyweight title, and ended their second contest with a thunderous first-round knockout. The Machida problem, for one fighter, for one night, at least, had been solved. But there's every reason to believe Machida isn't done showing us that what we thought we knew about mixed martial arts, about what works and what doesn't, is very much a work in progress.

Maeda, Akira

Akira Maeda is one of the most important men in the history of Japanese MMA, but it isn't for his accomplishments in the cage or ring. Although Web site **Sherdog's** Fight Finder lists Maeda as having a 7–5 pro record, he's never actually been in an MMA fight. Sherdog can breathe a sigh of relief: many Japanese wrestling fans were also fooled by Maeda's shoot style of pro wrestling. It was designed to look real, using real submission holds and throws from **judo** and wrestling, and it helped make Maeda one of the biggest stars in **professional wrestling**.

Maeda was discovered by New Japan pro wrestling executive Hisashi Shinma at a **karate** tournament in 1977. The young Maeda only cared about two things: motorcycles and fighting. New Japan was a natural fit and Maeda had the look and — at 6'3" and 240 pounds — the size to be a top star. Shinma was grooming him to fill the very big shoes of Japan's top wrestling star, **Antonio Inoki**.

But in the mid-1980s professional wrestling was going through a seismic upheaval in the United States: a shift towards entertainment and wacky gimmicks that was slowly invading Japan as well. Maeda hated the American style and his frustration often boiled over in the ring, where he soon had a reputation for working too stiffly, sometimes forgetting to take some of the steam off his kicks and slaps. The American wrestlers convinced the legendary Andre the Giant to do something about it.

During a match in 1986, the mammoth Giant refused to cooperate with Maeda. It was then and there that Maeda made his reputation as one of wrestling's legitimate tough guys. Maeda brutalized Andre's legs with hard kicks and took him down to the mat several times. Despite giving up eight inches in height and hundreds of pounds, Maeda more than held his own. Inoki himself eventually had to come into the ring to break up the chaos.

Maeda's temper often seemed to get the better of him. He punched out Keiji Muto, better known to American fans as the Great Muta, in a street fight and lost his job with New Japan when he kicked star Riki Choshu for real, breaking the orbital bones in Choshu's eye. Choshu, who had once been an Olympic wrestler, never even fell to the ground and was ready to fight. Maeda, wisely, bailed out of the ring before a legitimate tough guy shattered his reputation.

Maeda's cheap shot opened the door for the shoot-style wrestling revolution. Refusing to accept his punishment for blindsiding Choshu, Maeda and his cohorts left New Japan to form the Universal Wrestling Federation. The UWF quickly became the hottest ticket in Japan's urban centers like Tokyo, drawing primarily young men who loved the wrestlers' tough guy personas.

Although the UWF splintered into several competing groups after three years, it's helped to make the growth of MMA in Japan possible. Many of the most successful and important fighters in MMA history came from this talent pool. Fighters like **Ken Shamrock**, **Nobuhiko Takada**, **Kazushi Sakuraba**, **Dan Severn**, **Masakatsu Funaki**, and **Kiyoshi Tamura** all spent time in the UWF or one of its offshoots.

As big as those stars were, Maeda was bigger than them all. His splinter group **Rings**, didn't have the same highs as Takada's UWF, but it did consistently big business for half a decade before injuries sidelined Maeda. He used his celebrity and drawing power to help try to establish MMA culture in Japan and around the world. He and his partners successfully promoted events not just in Japan, but around the world. Rings events took place in Japan, Holland, Russia, Australia, and the United States.

As a promoter, Maeda had an eye for talent. He brought future stars like **Dan Henderson**, **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, **Gilbert Yvel**, and **Fedor Emelianenko** to the Japanese fans for the first time, only to see them poached by Takada's **Pride Fighting Championships**. It frustrated Maeda, who felt he was doing all the work, while reaping little of the reward. In 2000, he snapped.

Pride had recently stolen Rings champion Yvel, and Maeda was furious. When he saw **Pancrase** President Masami Ozuki eating lunch with Rings fighter **Jeremy Horn**, he was sure Ozuki was looking to take away another of his fighters. Rings and Pancrase were working together at the time to co-promote **Coliseum 2000**, a major show headlined by Pancrase founder Funaki taking on **Rickson Gracie**. This made the betrayal far worse in Maeda's eyes. Later that night, the enormous Maeda slapped the smaller Ozuki backstage and injured his neck and back. Ozuki eventually won a \$12,000 settlement.

In 2002, Rings finally collapsed for good. After having their lucrative deal with the cable station **wowow** cut in half, the group was unable to compete for top-flight talent. The much better funded Pride Fighting Championships won the war for Japanese MMA.

After years on the sidelines, Maeda was hired in 2005 to be a consultant for K-1's new MMA show called **Hero's**. When the group joined forces to work with the former executives from Dream Stage Entertainment, whose Pride promotion had run Rings into the ground, the proud Maeda quit. Today, Maeda runs an amateur MMA contest called **The Outsider**.

Maeda, Mitsuyo

The Gracie family's purported dislike of **professional wrestling** is a bit ironic when you consider the fact that the man who taught **judo** to **Carlos Gracie** was

himself a wrestler. Mitsuyo Maeda traveled the world, not only teaching judo, but also making his living inside the ring in a variety of wrestling troupes. America, Cuba, England, Belgium, Spain, Mexico, and the Caribbean: Maeda was everywhere, using all of his 140 pounds to throw larger men to the mat with deceptive ease.

It was in Spain that Maeda earned the nickname that would follow him for the rest of his days. He became known as Conde Koma, the Count of Combat. After ten years on the road — wrestling, competing in countless challenge matches where spectators were offered \$250 if they could throw the judo master, and spreading Kano's judo to the world — Maeda finally settled down in Brazil. There, by the purest of chance, Maeda taught a student who would change the world of martial arts forever.

In 1917, Carlos Gracie was a rambunctious 14-year-old who happened upon one of Maeda's demonstrations at the Teatro de Paz in Belem, Brazil. Gracie was hooked and became Maeda's student until the Gracie family moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1920. Three years was hardly enough to learn all the intricacies of judo, but Gracie had the basics down. He taught his brothers, who taught their children, one of whom (**Rorion Gracie**) founded the **Ultimate Fighting Championship** in 1993.

Maeda was an excellent fighter in his own right, but how good remains a mystery. Because of his years as a professional wrestler, many of his fights are rightfully viewed with an air of skepticism. He certainly defeated hundreds of people in challenge matches all over the world. He also competed against dozens of western wrestlers, **karate** men, and even a capoeirista with a knife in one memorable Brazilian encounter. It was this eye for what techniques work and which don't, honed against local martial artists from across the globe, that made Maeda the perfect man to help spawn a modern combat art crafted to defeat all comers.

Maia, Demian

Height: 6'

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 11/6/77

Debut: The Cage: Volume 4 (12/3/05)

Career Record: 12-2

Notable Wins: Ed Herman (UFC 83); Nate Quarry (UFC 91); Chael Sonnen (UFC 95)

Notable Losses: Nate Marquardt (UFC 102); Anderson Silva (UFC 112)

UFC middleweight contender Demian Maia is a lifelong martial artist, trained variously in **judo**, **kung fu**, and **karate** from an early age. But he's made his mark as a mixed martial artist based almost entirely on his mastery of a single

discipline: **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**. At a time when versatility has become the hallmark of the successful fighter, Maia is unusually one-dimensional. But his skill in that single dimension, the submission game, so far outstrips that of his competition that he has rocketed up the middleweight ranks.

An **ADCC** submission wrestling champion, Maia made his UFC debut after three impressive submission wins in his first five professional fights, all victories. His winning ways continued in the Octagon as he put together a string of five consecutive submission wins, each of them absolute grappling clinics. For the most part, neither Maia nor his opponents looked like they'd even been in a fight as they left the cage. "That's what I want to do," he told **Joe Rogan** after finishing **Chael Sonnen** with a picture-perfect **triangle choke** after a smooth ankle-block takedown. "I want to show the jiu-jitsu to the world, and show the people that you can win the fight without hurting your opponent."

Former **Pancrase** champion **Nate Marquardt** showed the people something else when he decked Maia with a huge straight right hand, ending their UFC 102 contest in only 21 seconds and handing the Brazilian his first career loss. Regardless, Maia has established himself as one of the top submission artists in all of mixed martial arts, an analytical and expert grappler whose technical elegance serves as a counterpoint to the now all-too-familiar stand-and-bang ethos of **TUF**-era MMA.

Manhoef, Melvin

Nickname: Marvelous

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 5/11/76

Debut: Battle of Amstelveen (12/2/95)

Career Record: 24-8-1

Notable Wins: Kazushi Sakuraba (Dream 4); Mark Hunt (Dynamite!! 2008)

Notable Losses: Bob Schreiber (2H2H 11); Yoshihiro Akiyama (Hero's 7); Dong Sik Yoon (Dynamite!! USA); Gegard Mousasi (Dream 6); Paulo Filho (Dream 10)

Melvin Manhoef is a monster. A true K-1-level striker with serious knockout power and unparalleled aggression, Manhoef is without question one of the scariest men in the sport — until you get him on the ground. Then, it's all of a sudden a very different story.

Manhoef is first and foremost a **Muay Thai** fighter, a kickboxer willing to throw down under mixed martial arts rules, but not a true mixed martial artist. Although his complete lack of a ground game obviously limits how far he can go in the sport, it didn't stop him from capturing the **Cage Rage** light heavyweight title and defending it for nearly two years. It didn't stop him from blitzing the legendary **Kazushi Sakuraba** and stopping him in the first

round, or from taking out the iron-headed heavyweight **Mark Hunt** in only 18 seconds.

It did mean, though, that he had no answer for **Yoshihiro Akiyama**, who caught him in a beautiful **arm bar** transition in the first round of their **Hero's** title fight after the **judo** competitor managed to weather an early storm so fierce that Akiyama's mother was in tears at ringside. It also meant that he was thoroughly controlled throughout his bout with Yoon Dong Sik before succumbing once again to an arm bar (or "Dongbar," as it has come to be known in Yoon's particular case). Add **Gegard Mousasi** and **Paulo Filho** to the list of fighters who've made Manhoef look silly on the ground. It would be wrong to say that they exposed him — there's nothing to expose. Everybody already knows Manhoef has nothing to offer once the fight hits the mat. Until it gets there, though, look out.

Marquardt, Nathan

Nickname: Nate the Great	Height: 6'
Weight: 185 lbs	Born: 4/20/79
Debut: WVF: Durango (4/17/99)	Career Record: 29-9-2
Notable Wins: Yves Edwards (Bas Rutten Invitational 4); Shonie Carter (Pancrase: Anniversary Show 2000); Kiuma Kunioku (Pancrase: Spirit 9); Jeremy Horn (UFC 81); Demian Maia (UFC 102)	



Notable Losses: Genki Sudo (Pancrase: Breakthrough 11); Ricardo Almeida (Pancrase: Hybrid 10); Anderson Silva (UFC 73); Chael Sonnen (UFC 109)

Nate Marquardt is one of the friendliest guys you'll ever meet. Soft-spoken with an infectious smile, Nate always seems to be in good spirits. It's his hands that give him away as a professional fighter. The middle knuckle on both hands is swollen all the time. On his left hand, one of the knuckles is missing, pushed up into his hand courtesy of long-ago bare-knuckle fights early in his career. Make no mistake: Marquardt is a great guy, a religious family man from Colorado. But he can and will throw down with the best of them.

Occasionally the two sides of Nate Marquardt will intersect, although he tries to keep the fighter separate from his family. In his **UFC 102** fight with fellow contender **Demian Maia**, Marquardt sent his opponent flying with a brutal knockout in just 21 seconds. Many fighters, like Marquardt's fellow middleweight contender **Dan Henderson** or even his teammate **Rashad Evans**, would have used that split second between punch and ref stoppage to gleefully rain

In Their Own Words: Nate Marquardt on fighting Anderson Silva again

"He's done so well for himself and he's made some of the fights look easy. When people make fights look easy, especially against top opponents, people start to fear them. But I train with some of the best in the world. Not even necessarily the best MMA fighters in the world, but the best boxers and the best grapplers. I have confidence that I can beat him. Against a guy like Anderson, confidence is huge. If you don't have confidence going in, you don't even have a chance. Because you are going to hold back and he's going to attack all day. When you look at someone and see fear, that's normal. It's how they react to that fear. All fighters have fear; it's how they react to it. If they are going to focus in and go harder, go for the knockout or push back, that's different than someone who's going to get hurt and turn away. And you can see that in their eyes sometimes. I won't back away.

"I have an idea how that fight would go. I wouldn't want to reveal my strategy, but I can tell you I'm a completely different fighter than I was the first time I fought him. I'm a lot better technically. I'm faster and stronger. And the main thing is that mentally going into the fight, I'm a totally different fighter. It would look a lot different than the first time."

down a few extra and unnecessary blows. Not Marquardt. He saw Maia was out and held his blow at the last moment, a gentleman to the end.

Before he was a top contender for the UFC, Marquardt was earning the respect of the hard-core fans in Japan. He never appeared in one of the big promotions there, sticking instead to **Pancrase**, a blue-collar promotion closer to his own roots. There he established himself as the middleweight King of Pancrase and one of the best fighters in the world.

His first UFC fight was a disaster. He was known as an exciting well-rounded fighter and was signed to battle another dynamic fighter, Ivan Salaverry, in the main event of the first *Ultimate Fight Night* on Spike TV. It was one of the worst fights of all time, and to make matters worse, despite winning a lackluster decision, Marquardt was the true loser after testing positive for the steroid Nandrolone after the fight.

Marquardt recovered smartly, winning three in a row before falling victim to middleweight champion **Anderson Silva** at UFC 73. Since then, Nate the Great has been on a journey to regain the opportunity to challenge for the UFC gold. Along the way he's shed his reputation as a boring fighter, winning three in a row by spectacular knockout. At 30 years of age, Marquardt is just entering his physical prime. Combine that with an ever-expanding skill set that started with **karate** as a kid, skills honed to perfection by famed trainer **Greg Jackson**, and a UFC title seems likely to attach itself to Marquardt's resume before his career is over.

MARS

The **Extreme Fighting** Championship wasn't the UFC's only big money competition. Despite rising controversy and a very shaky future, the sport continued to attract eager promoters. One such, Atlanta surgeon John Keating, was the ultimate money mark. He had been the ringside doctor at UFC 7 and was dying to get involved in the MMA business. Keating paid \$10,000 for private jiu-jitsu lessons from **Royce Gracie**, but that just whetted his growing appetite. After staging some fights in dojos and warehouses, including a fight with future UFC standout **Jeremy Horn**, Keating was ready to take the leap with a full-blown extravaganza.

Martial Arts Reality Superfighting, better known as MARS, had plenty of potential. The concept was "Russia versus Brazil," which could have been entertaining. Instead, Keating was unable to secure any of the standout Russian fighters he wanted, and Brazil swept three less-than-super super-fights. A 16-man tournament somehow ended in a draw when **Murilo Bustamante** stalemated the gigantic wrestler **Tom Erickson** in a tepid 40-minute starefest, and MARS was starting to look like a disaster. It was up to two of

the world's best to save the show. **Oleg Taktarov** was scheduled to fight **Renzo Gracie** in the main event.

Taktarov was the one superstar Russian MARS had managed to bring in, but he had Keating pulling out his hair from the moment the papers were signed. First, Taktarov allegedly demanded \$50,000 to cancel a fight with **Marco Ruas** that was scheduled just two weeks before MARS. Keating refused, and the fight went forward and resulted in an injury to Taktarov's hand. Then, moments before he was supposed to hit the ring, he asked for more money again, threatening to walk out if he didn't get his way. He was persuaded to honor his obligations and, in a display of the power of karma, was knocked out by a prone Gracie with an up-kick, an unusual ending for an unusual and disastrous show.

Matsui, Daijiro

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 199 lbs

Born: 12/05/72

Debut: Pride 3 (6/24/98)

Career Record: 11-23-4

Notable Wins: Bob Schrijber (Pride 7); Jose Landi-Jons (Pride 14); Quinton Jackson (Pride 18)

Notable Losses: Carlos Newton (Pride 6); Wanderlei Silva (Pride 8); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 9); Vitor Belfort (Pride 10); Ryo Chonan (Deep 13th Impact); Paulo Filho (Gladiator FC Day 2); Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: Blow 6)

Strangely enough, as Daijiro Matsui collapsed in a writhing heap only 14 seconds into his **Pride 18** bout against **Quinton Jackson**, it was actually a career highlight of sorts. Taking a solid knee to the groin from one of the world's top light heavyweight fighters is a tough way to make a living, but that DQ win was about as good as it ever got for the game but perpetually overmatched Japanese **catch wrestler**. Matsui managed to go the distance with an impressive list of top competitors, but only took the decision over one: Jose "Pele" Landi-Jons, a dangerous **Chute Boxe** striker who put Matsui down, but not out. A Pride staple, and a fixture in the corner of longtime training partner **Kazushi Sakuraba**, Matsui continued to compete in smaller Japanese organizations like **Deep** and **Pancrase** after his time in the big leagues had passed, and found a small measure of success in England's **Cage Rage**.

Matua, John

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 400 lbs

Debut: UFC 6 (7/14/95)

Career Record: 1-4

Notable Loss: Tank Abbott (UFC 6)

John Matua was a central part of one of the most iconic moments in MMA history. Unfortunately for the big Hawaiian, his star turn came when he was knocked unconscious by a giant **Tank Abbott** right hand. As Matua convulsed on the mat, arms locked straight like Frankenstein, he was mercilessly mocked by his conqueror. At that moment, Tank Abbott became a star, and the ultimate spectacle that was **SEG's UFC** had its ultimate highlight.

Mazzagatti, Steve

In the build to his rematch with **Frank Mir** at **UFC 100**, **Brock Lesnar** argued that the only reason he hadn't finished Mir the first time around was an unfair standup and point deduction administered by referee Steve Mazzagatti when Mir was down and almost out. Mazzagatti thought he saw punches land to the back of Mir's head and intervened immediately — which was particularly surprising given Mazzagatti's reputation for sometimes letting beatings go on dangerously long. Lesnar also complained that Mazzagatti was inexplicably slow in breaking Mir's hold as Lesnar tapped again and again to the match-ending **knee bar**. Looking at the tape, it's hard to argue with either of those points. Lesnar, never one to mince words, puts his feelings towards Mazzagatti this way: "I'd like to punch his fucking moustache right off his face. *Man*, I hate the fucking guy."

He's not alone. Mazzagatti has faced an enormous amount of criticism for his work inside the cage, and not just from aggrieved fighters trying to explain away a loss, analysts dissecting split-second decisions with the benefit of replay, or message board posters quick to jump on any perceived slip-up. No, Mazzagatti has taken heat from the most powerful man in the sport. Soon after the Lesnar/Mir rematch — which, unsurprisingly, saw **Herb Dean** as the third man in the Octagon this time around — UFC President **Dana White** appeared on *The Opie & Anthony Show*, where he was asked, among other things, for his thoughts on Mazzagatti. "Mazzagatti, as a referee? This fucking guy shouldn't even be watching MMA on TV, let alone refereeing it," White answered. "I think he's the worst ref in the history of any fight business, ever. He's horrible."

"It's not that I don't like him," White took pains to clarify. "He's a nice guy. He's an absolute nice guy, [but] he has no business whatsoever being anywhere near mixed martial arts." The hosts were confused and wondered how it was that Mazzagatti was able to referee UFC events despite White's complete disdain for his work. "We don't pick the refs," White explained. "The athletic commission does. Those guys are picked by the government."

And somehow, Mazzagatti keeps on getting picked. It might be easier to make sense of this had Mazzagatti once been a top-notch referee who had

since fallen off, but was still getting by on the strength of his reputation. But Mazzagatti has been questionable almost since his UFC debut — and not questionable in a niggling, nit-picking sort of way, but in a way that makes you wonder how poor Jay Hieron survived the seemingly endless beating **Georges St. Pierre** was forced to put on him before Mazzagatti would end the fight. An underground compilation of “Mazzagatti Moments” of this kind has been circulating around the internet for some time now, and while it’s not for the faint of heart, it’s definitely illuminating. At the very least, it helps you understand where Brock Lesnar is coming from.

McCarthy, John

How many times have you been watching an MMA show and had not the slightest clue who was fighting? Two bald, tattooed, anonymous dudes, one in red shorts and one in black. Characters in an old-school video game were easier to distinguish than most of these guys. But you always knew the referee.



It was “Big” John McCarthy, and you could count on him to do the right thing. Has he made a mistake or two? Did he once break **Brian Johnston**’s nose trying to pull him off a finished opponent? Sure. Did he try to say **Kazushi Sakuraba** was down and out when he was clearly just looking for a takedown at **UFC Japan**? Well, yes. No one is perfect, but Big John is close.

McCarthy’s ubiquitous “Are you ready? Are you ready? Let’s get it on!” is as synonymous with MMA as referee Ed Hochuli’s sculpted physique and skin-tight shirt is with the NFL. John McCarthy is *the* UFC referee. The former police officer makes the shows seem bigger by his very presence. And, let’s be honest, most of the new guys are horrible. They either want to stop a fight

the first time a blow lands (I'm looking at you, Yves Lavigne) or they seem to be hoping and praying someone is beaten to death (I'm looking at you, **Steve Mazzagatti**).

McCarthy, on the other hand, has perfect timing. Just as you think to yourself, 'Man, they probably should stop this, I think that one guy's eyeball is about to pop out of his head,' *bam*. There he is: Big John to save the day and some chump's eyeball.

He's unquestionably a great referee, one who seems bulletproof to the controversies that perhaps should have become bigger issues. When he joined the promotion after UFC 2, it was at the invitation of **Rorion Gracie**. McCarthy was friends with the family and trained with them at their Torrance, California, Gracie Academy. It was an obvious conflict of interest, yet McCarthy seemed to fly under the radar. There was no real media coverage of the new sport and what coverage there was focused on whether the fighting should be legal at all. No one discussed the nuances, like whether or not it was appropriate for a Gracie student to make important decisions about a Gracie's fights.

Of course, we know now McCarthy was beyond reproach. In a judgment call business, his decision making was unparalleled. He left refereeing behind to join the Fight Network in 2007, providing coverage and commentary of the fight game, including criticism of fellow officials and commissions that would come back to haunt him. He also did commentary for the **Affliction** promotion, earning himself a spot on the infamous **Zuffa** enemies list, making a return to the UFC unlikely.

In 2009, he applied for a referee's license in the state of Nevada, looking to make a return to the Octagon. Athletic Commissioner Keith Kizer, rumored to be upset about McCarthy's public criticisms when he was a member of the media, rebuffed the legend. McCarthy saw his application placed in the slush pile, joining more than a dozen other applicants for a rare opening in the state. McCarthy continues to officiate events in California for **Strikeforce** and runs Big John McCarthy's Ultimate Training Academy in Los Angeles.

Melendez, Gilbert

Nickname: El Niño

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 4/12/82

Debut: WEC 5 (10/18/02)

Career Record: 18-2

Notable Wins: Rumina Sato (Shooto: Alive Road); Clay Guida (Strikeforce: Revenge); Tatsuya Kawajiri (Pride Shockwave 2006); Shinya Aoki (Strikeforce: Nashville)

Notable Losses: Mitsuhiro Ishida (Yarennoka); Josh Thomson (Strikeforce: Melendez vs. Thomson)

Gilbert Melendez seemed like an unstoppable force. He came charging forward and nothing stopped him until the bell rang or his opponent was finished. Melendez did the impossible, even dropping Naoya Uematsu with a **professional wrestling** move called the Death Valley Driver, picking him up over his shoulders and dropping him on his head. The press came up with the perfect nickname for this wrecking ball: “El Niño.” Like the deadly storm, Melendez wiped out everything in his path, even **Shooto** legend **Rumina Sato**.

Melendez’s path to the top of the lightweight division continued: after beating **Clay Guida** to win the **Strikeforce** lightweight championship, he moved from Shooto to **Pride** to compete with some of Japan’s top little men. He upset **Tatsuya Kawajiri** and was suddenly at or near the top of most top ten lists. Then the train seemed to come off the tracks. Melendez was outwrestled and out-worked by Mitsuhiro Ishida in a high profile fight in Japan and then lost his Strikeforce title to **UFC** washout Josh Thomson. After trying, and failing twice, to get a rematch with Thomson, the two finally met in one of 2009’s best fights. For the second time, Melendez avenged a loss and moved on to fight Japanese sensation **Shinya Aoki**. Many in the media speculated that Aoki might actually be the best lightweight in the world. Melendez put that speculation to rest with a dominating five-round decision, establishing himself as one of the division’s very best.

Menne, Dave

Height: 5’10”

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 7/29/74

Debut: HOOKnSHOOT: Lightweight Championship (4/4/97)

Career Record: 43-16-2

Notable Wins: Dennis Hallman (Shooto: 10th Anniversary); Fabiano Iha (UFC 24); Jose Landi-Jons (WEF 9); Carlos Newton (Warriors War 1); Gil Castillo (UFC 33)

Notable Losses: Shonie Carter (Extreme Challenge 5); Matt Hughes (Extreme Challenge 21); Kiyoshi Tamura (Rings: King of Kings 99); Murilo Bustamante (UFC 35); Phil Baroni (UFC 39); Hayato Sakurai (Deep 10th Impact); Josh Koscheck (*Ultimate Fight Night* 5)

Dave Menne has seen the highs and lows of the MMA business, fought in the biggest shows on the glitzy Las Vegas strip and in the most humble circumstances imaginable. His first MMA bout was supposed to be for a small promotion in Wisconsin, in a respectable gym in front of a thousand or so fans. Unfortunately for Menne, the show was scheduled during the peak of the anti-**UFC** backlash, when local and state governments were shutting shows down right and left. The show had to be held on the down low, and instead

In Their Own Words: Dave Menne on his near-death experience

"I was diagnosed with Lyme disease. It was a weird kind of hell. It's something that's impossible to explain to somebody. I had heart palpitations and various other things. Every other odd and crazy thing that could possibly happen to a human being. There was a lack of neural sensation on the outside of my body. As I started to come back, my body would react differently. I don't entirely know what to say. After two months, I was wonderful. But that was after two months of being as bad off as you could imagine. Everything after that felt great. I've been in the building stages since then, working on my striking, working on my grappling, working on my strength. Now it's a matter of getting everything down, tightening up the strings, and playing a pretty song."

of an arena, it ended up going down in an abandoned house, with no heat, in the middle of the freezing cold Wisconsin winter.

From that humble beginning, Menne rose all the way to the very top: he was the first UFC middleweight champion, winning the title at UFC 33. It was a hollow victory for a fighter who had beaten some of the sport's very best. His opponent for the inaugural middleweight title was a welterweight in his first bout at 185 pounds: former wrestler **Gil Castillo**. Castillo showed heart, but wasn't able to keep up with Menne's quick transitions on the ground and his steady clinch attack on his feet. Menne's five-round decision win was the highlight of one of the UFC's very worst cards. It was their first time in Las Vegas and the first time on pay-per-view, and the fighters up and down the card turned in dreadful performances.

It was the peak for Menne. He lost his title in his first defense, outgunned by the superlative **Murilo Bustamante**, the **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** specialist who was at the top of his game. His comeback fight, at UFC 39, saw Menne on the wrong end of a highlight still seen on UFC broadcasts today, a victim of the fast and furious fists of **Phil Baroni**.

Menne was never the same after the Baroni fight. He did well on independent shows against low-level competition, but every time he stepped up in class against UFC-caliber opposition, Menne came up short.

Mercer, Ray

Nickname: Merciless

Weight: 256 lbs

Debut: 6/23/07

Height: 6'1"

Born: 4/4/61

Career Record: 1-1

Notable Win: Tim Sylvia (Adrenaline III)

Notable Loss: Kimbo Slice (Cage Fury Fighting Championship 5)

Ray Mercer was a former Olympic gold medalist and WBO heavyweight **boxing** champion fallen on hard times. At 46, he was quickly running out of dough, and ex-boxers aren't blessed with a ton of other workplace opportunities. That meant Mercer had to do the only thing he knew how to do: fight.

Like many in the world of boxing, Mercer saw a quick buck in the growing sport of MMA. He fought internet sensation **Kimbo Slice** in 2007 but was completely unprepared to handle Slice on the ground, losing quickly via submission.

His second chance in MMA was actually intended to be a boxing match. Former **UFC** champion **Tim Sylvia** was at a crossroads in his MMA career and wanted to try his hand at boxing. Mercer seemed like a safe choice. He had a big name but was 48 years old. A boxing match in a cage with a washed-up old has-been seemed like a winnable fight for Sylvia. New Jersey disagreed. Sylvia had no career boxing matches; Mercer had 44 professional fights.

Because New Jersey wouldn't sanction the fight, promoter **Monte Cox** moved it to the anything-goes state of Alabama. That kind of thing may work in the freewheeling world of MMA, but a new federal law made it illegal in boxing. The fight would have to be MMA to continue forward. Mercer was game and it seemed to make little difference to him. He hit Sylvia with the first punch he threw, a right hand that knocked the big man cold. With Sylvia shaking on the mat, Mercer celebrated in the cage. Like Kimbo Slice, he would now live forever on the internet, a YouTube legend in an increasingly digital world.

In Their Own Words: Ray Mercer on fighting Tim Sylvia in MMA

"I got to feel like this is the best day of his life, because I've got to come over to his world and do his thing. But I'm willing to do that. Because I am who I am. But if MMA isn't getting him anywhere, he should box me. Be a man and do what we said we were going to do and that's box. So it's going to boil down to who's a real man and who's going to do what he said he was going to do. We can get in there and kick and all that. I'm not going to be kicking or nothing. I'm going to do boxing. If he wants to box, we'll box. If he wants to kick and get down there and rattle, we'll do that shit too. I'll do MMA, MCI, AT&T, I'll do all of it. Anything he wants to do, I'm ready."



Although mixed martial arts is contested around the world in rings and cages of all kinds, it's the UFC's Octagon that has become the most powerful symbol of the sport.

Another powerful symbol of the sport.





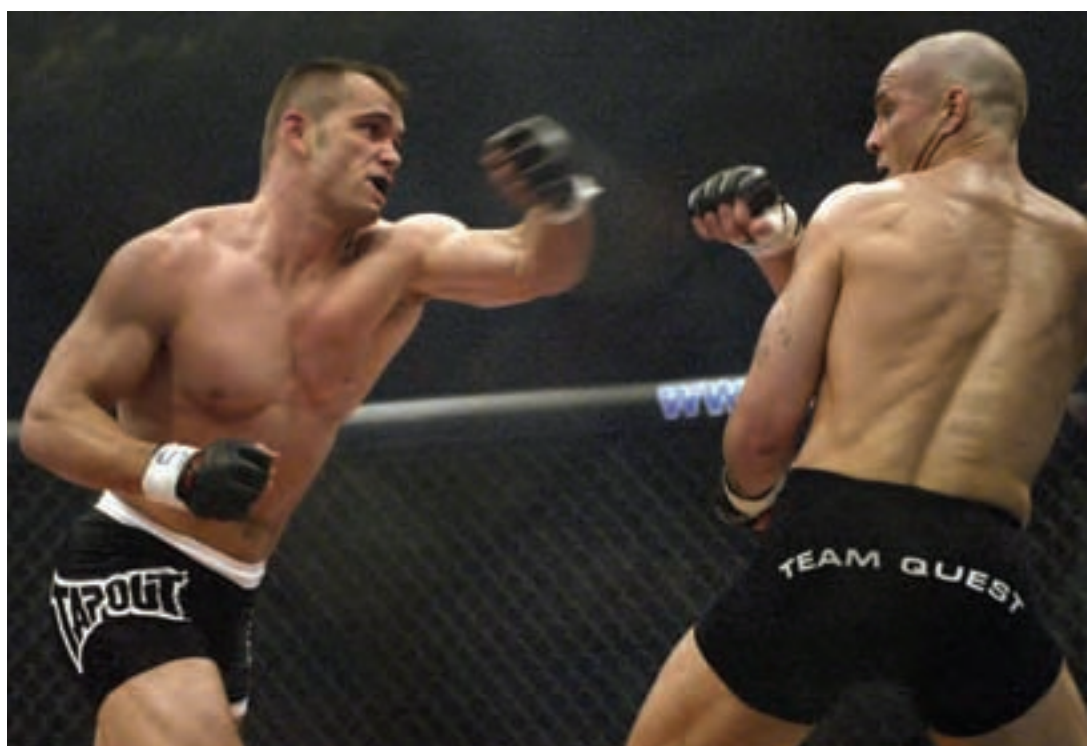
With dynamic strikes and unconventional throws, Cung Le fights like a kung fu movie come to life.

Wanderlei Silva batters Quinton Jackson with a barrage of knees in the final moments of Pride's epic 2003 Middleweight Grand Prix.





Few fighters have reigned over their divisions with the kind of dominance Matt Hughes displayed as UFC welterweight champion.



Former high school math teacher Rich Franklin takes the fight to Evan Tanner, a wandering spirit who met his untimely end in 2008.



The iron-jawed Wesley “Cabbage” Correia was famed for his ability to take a beating, like the one handed out here by future UFC heavyweight champion Andrei Arlovski.

A thoroughly nasty veteran of the sport’s outlaw era, Patrick Smith took on Eric “Butterbean” Esch at the disastrous Yamma Pit Fighting event.



Often bloodied but rarely beaten, Kenny Florian has made his reputation on his ability to finish fights.

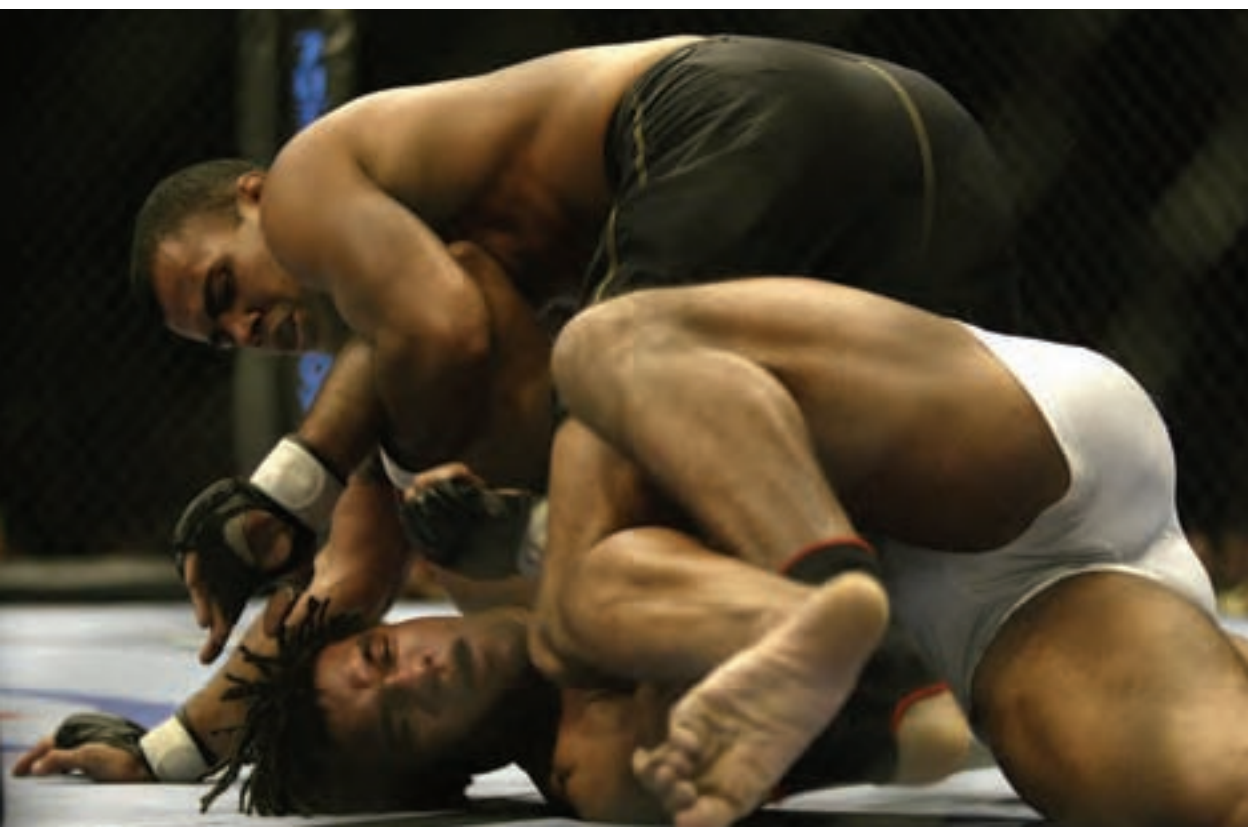


True to form, the great Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira emerged victorious from his UFC 73 bout against Heath Herring despite being knocked silly in the early going.



In only his second UFC fight, Georges St. Pierre aims a high kick at Jay Hieron, showing the form that would eventually propel him to the pinnacle of his sport.

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu black belt Renato Verissimo works to maintain his dominant position over Canadian grappler Carlos Newton.



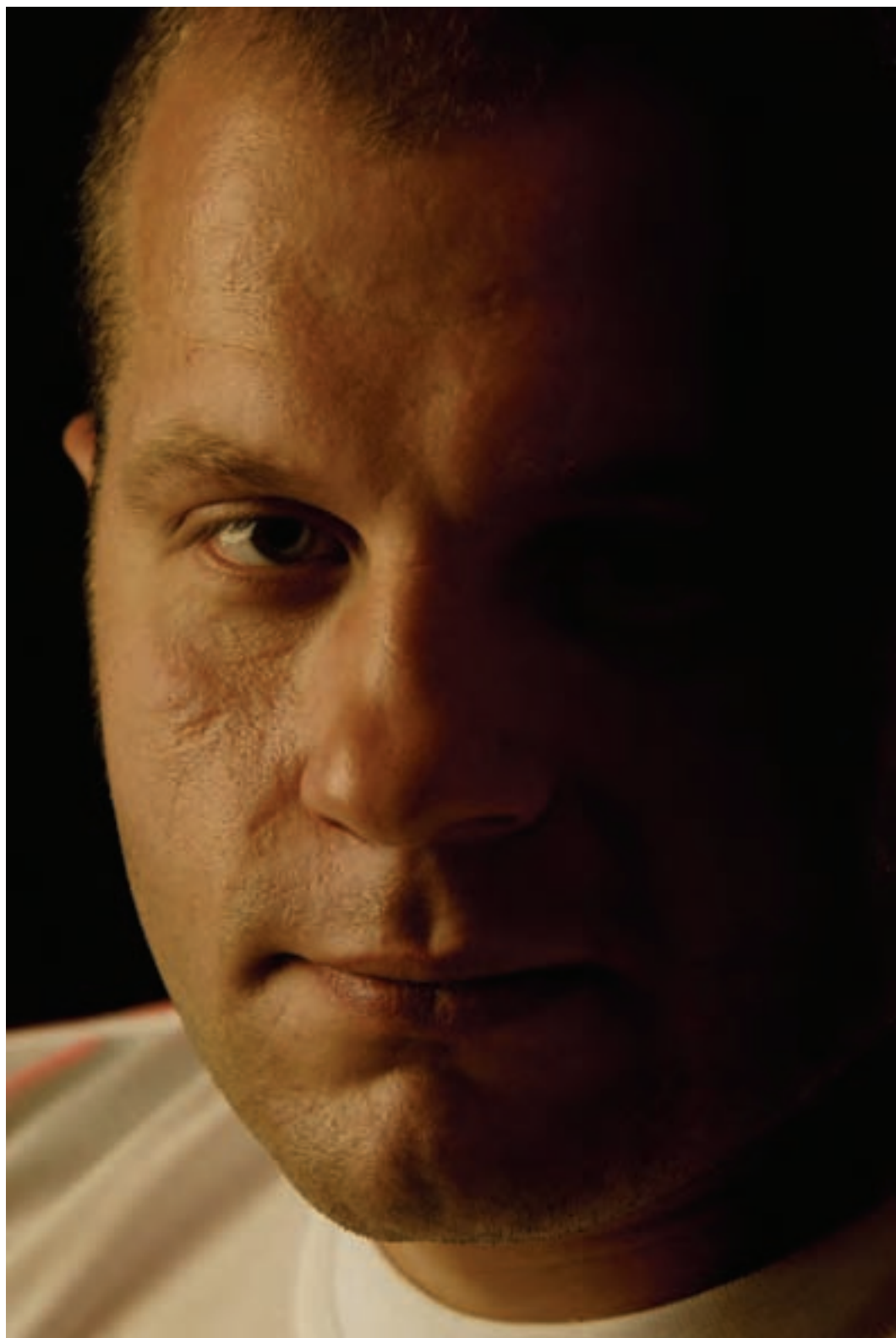


UFC light heavyweight champion Randy Couture, Pride middleweight champion Wanderlei Silva, and UFC President Dana White tease a title unification fight that never materialized.

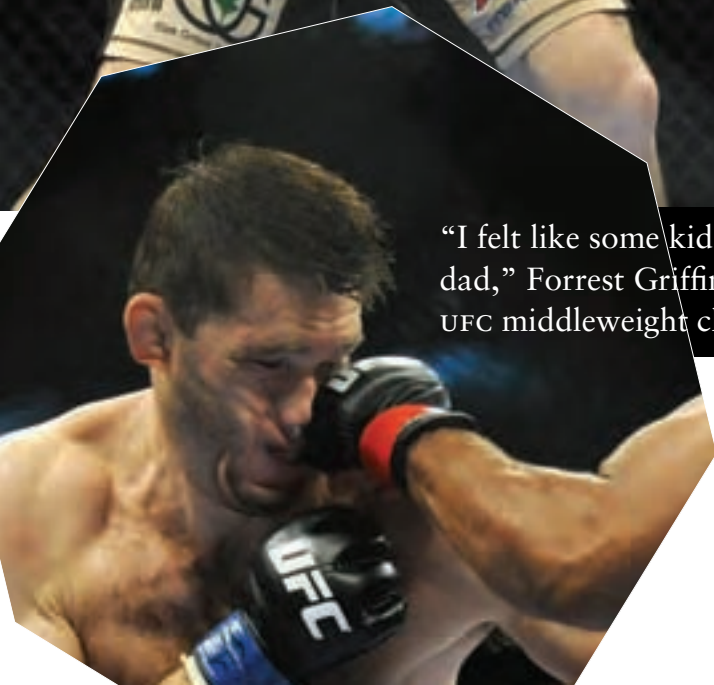
Nick Diaz and Karo Parisyan, fiery and colorful students of Cesar Gracie and “Judo” Gene Lebell respectively, going the distance at UFC 49.

Nate Marquardt, King of Pancrase, on the streets of Tokyo.





The most dangerous fighter in the history of mixed martial arts, Fedor Emelianenko.



“I felt like some kid trying to wrestle his dad,” Forrest Griffin said about his loss to UFC middleweight champion Anderson Silva.



Chuck Liddell's iconic victory celebration.



Future UFC welterweight champion Matt Serra launches Jeff Curran with a spectacular throw at UFC 46.

In a clash of Brazilian grapplers, Renato “Babalu” Sobral takes Mauricio “Shogun” Rua to the mat.

Eddie Alvarez loses the fashion battle to Daisuke Hanazawa in early career action for both men.





Despite the fireworks, tough but plodding UFC heavyweight champion Tim Sylvia failed to truly connect with fans.

Bob Sapp styled his incredibly popular fighting persona after the professional wrestling greats. His ring entrance is pure Ric Flair.





David “Tank” Abbott was the original street-fighting MMA star, a forerunner to the Kimbo Slice experiment.



Japanese legend Kazushi Sakuraba hunts for a submission against the powerful Kevin Randleman.

Nick Diaz has used his pawing jab to great effect throughout his career, even against such heavy hitters as “Ruthless” Robbie Lawler.





A clash of two of Pride's top heavyweight stars, Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira and Mirko Cro Cop.

Despite the one-sided bouts it produced, the Tito Ortiz/Ken Shamrock feud did big business when the UFC needed it most.





Randy Couture
forced a doctor's
stoppage in his
title fight against
Vitor Belfort
with the help of
ferocious elbows
from guard.



Meyrowitz, Bob: see **Semaphore Entertainment Group**

Mezger, Guy

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 1/1/68

Debut: UFC 4 (12/16/94)

Career Record: 31-13-2

Notable Wins: Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: Truth 10); Tito Ortiz (UFC 13); Masakatsu Funaki (Pancrase: Advance 5)

Notable Losses: Bas Rutten (Pancrase: Truth 10); Tito Ortiz (UFC 19); Chuck Liddell (Pride 14)

Guy Mezger was an MMA pioneer, the King of **Pancrase** when that title still meant something, and able to hold his own with some of the best fighters the sport has ever seen. He fought competitively with **Chuck Liddell** and **Wanderlei**

In Their Own Words: Guy Mezger on old-school versus new-school MMA

"I really enjoyed my time as a combat athlete. It's always been my dream since I was a kid to be somebody special, especially in athletics. For me to have gotten the opportunities I've had, I have to realize how blessed I've been. To have been a part of the original thing has been kind of fun, because I'm sure when I get a lot older and I'm half senile, I'll be 80 years old saying, 'You think you've got it tough, kid? When I fought they didn't have rules! No rules and no weight classes. You guys are wimps today!'

"I had to learn the submission game and we learned the **catch wrestling** style of submission, which is a very fast moving style. It was something new to me at the time. Fighters today don't really have to go through what we did. I was a wrestler and a **karate** fighter and then a **judo** player and then I learned kickboxing. I learned the whole gamut of stuff I didn't need to learn. Today we take a little bit from here and a little bit from there and we make ourselves an MMA fighter. Now we've got guys who've never wrestled competitively who have great takedowns. We have guys that are technically white belts in judo or jiu-jitsu that know how to do very good **arm bars** and chokes. Really what's happened now, is that it's gone from this individual style into its own sport. Not only is it a sport, but it's a style of fighting now. So they cut to the chase, cut through a lot of the crap to what's really going to work. And that's really kind of the biggest difference between today and yesterday."

Silva, and beat top stars like Yuki Kondo, **Masakatsu Funaki**, and **Tito Ortiz**. Unfortunately, Mezger will likely be remembered not for his fights, but for his part in one of MMA's most vicious feuds.

At **UFC 13**, Mezger won the UFC lightweight tournament. He was the favorite coming in, but his win was not without controversy. In the finals he met an alternate named Tito Ortiz, a future champion who was just starting his MMA career. Ortiz had Mezger in trouble, raining knees down on his head, when referee **John McCarthy** inexplicably stood them up to check on a cut. When the action started again, Ortiz had lost his dominant position and was caught in a Mezger **guillotine choke** to end the fight. After the fight, Ortiz felt Mezger and his camp, the **Lion's Den**, were disrespectful and cocky. It was the beginning of a long feud between Tito and the Den.

After beating Mezger's training partner **Jerry Bohlander**, Ortiz got a chance at revenge. This time he made the most of it, beating Mezger mercilessly in a one-sided fight. When McCarthy stopped this fight, it was to declare Ortiz the winner. Tito shot two birds at the Lion's Den corner and put on a custom-made T-shirt that said, "Gay Mezger Is My Bitch." In Mezger's corner, Lion's Den founder **Ken Shamrock** went ballistic. The Shamrock/Ortiz feud had begun, leaving Guy Mezger in the shadows, a forgotten fighter.

Miletich, Pat

Nickname: Croatian Sensation

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 3/9/68

Debut: BOTM 1 (10/28/95)

Career Record: 29-7-2

Notable Wins: Mikey Burnett (UFC 17.5); Shonie Carter (Extreme Challenge 27, UFC 32)

Notable Losses: Matt Hume (EF 4); Jose Landi-Jons (WEF 8); Kiyoshi Tamura (Rings: Millenium Combine 3); Carlos Newton (UFC 31); Matt Lindland (UFC 36); Renzo Gracie (IFL: Gracie vs. Miletich)

Pat Miletich was a fine fighter and a brilliant trainer. Pat Miletich, despite revisionist history courtesy of L. Jon Wertheim's *Blood in the Cage*, was not the top fighter of his generation. In fact, he was never even close. He preyed on local fighters for promoter **Monte Cox's Extreme Challenge** and beat some pretty good fighters in the **UFC**. But every time Miletich fought a world-class opponent, he failed.

Growing up without a father, the youngest of five children, Pat Miletich was a born fighter. Older brothers toughen you up, and being a little guy in a big man's world tends to leave a chip on your shoulder. Unlike almost everyone in

Iowa, Miletich didn't grow up with **wrestling** on his mind. It was just something he did between football seasons. Miletich was a tough, scrappy football player, but there is little future in the sport for a 165-pound nose guard. Wrestling, on the other hand, came naturally to him. Instead of being outweighed by 100 pounds, his opponent was the same size he was. He had a real shot of pursuing the sport after high school, with plans to go to Sioux Empire Junior College, but he just couldn't bring himself to care about school. Instead, he drifted.

With no college education and no connections, Miletich struggled to make ends meet. He poured concrete and even dug in dumpsters when money was tight. Under no circumstances would he ask anyone for help, no matter how desperate the times. Simply put, he was heading nowhere, just drifting through life, working dead-end jobs and brawling in the street. Eventually he found focus in the martial arts, studying **karate**, kickboxing, and eventually finding his way to a **Renzo Gracie** grappling seminar in Chicago in 1992.

Miletich became obsessed with **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**, studying Gracie's instructional videos and sparring with friends in the basement of their karate dojo. When he had the opportunity to test himself in the sport then called "No Holds Barred," Miletich was ready. He had all the tools: standup skills from karate and **boxing**, high school wrestling, and some rudimentary jiu-jitsu. It was enough. At the Battle of the Masters, the 170-pound Miletich beat all comers to take home \$5,000. He had finally found his calling.

Among fighters in the Midwest, Miletich quickly became a legend. He beat everyone at local shows. Soon the region's other top fighters, like grappling wizard **Jeremy Horn**, were moving to Bettendorf, Iowa, to work with Miletich in a racquetball court he rented from a local gym. Miletich was obsessed with the UFC, waiting for a phone call that never came. When he did get the call up to the big time, it was for **John Perretti's Extreme Fighting**.

Perretti was ahead of his time. Unlike the UFC, still pitting the little guys against giants in freak show contests, Extreme Fighting instituted weight classes and rounds. In short, it treated fighting as a sport and was the perfect fit for the hard-nosed Miletich. Unfortunately, for Miletich at least, his opponent was a more experienced and more skilled fighter from **Pancrase** named **Matt Hume**.

Like Miletich, Hume would go on to become one of MMA's top trainers, but that was some time ahead for both men. On this night, the two went back and forth in a bout that looked like it had been brought back in time from the next decade. The two were both complete fighters, well-tuned fighting machines trading blows, holds, and takedowns. After one furious round of

action, the doctor stopped the fight because of a Miletich broken nose. For the tough guy from Iowa, who once chased a man down in a street fight after having his teeth knocked out of his mouth, having a professional fight stopped because of a broken nose burned.

It was the story of Miletich's career. Against middling fighters, Miletich was a monster. Against the best of the best, like Jose "Pele" Landi-Jons, **Carlos Newton**, and Renzo Gracie, Miletich always came out of the fray with an "L" on his record. That doesn't entirely dismiss Miletich's greatness. He was a solid, smart, and skilled fighter. When he finally got his shot in the UFC, he made the most of it. He won seven in a row inside the Octagon, winning a lightweight tournament and the welterweight title. Wertheim and others confused this success with a dominant run as one of the sport's best. The problem with that theory? Miletich lost three times outside the UFC during his "undefeated" run as champion. He was a good but not great fighter, and Carlos Newton proved it at UFC 31.

While Miletich was the type of fighter that might bring a lunch pail into the cage, a blue-collar hard-nosed Midwesterner who took no prisoners, Newton was his polar opposite. Newton was an explosive athlete and charismatic performer. He entered the cage with aplomb and celebrated his wins like he was a *Street Fighter* video game character. Newton submitted Miletich with a bulldog choke, ending his three-year run as UFC welterweight champion.

Many have forgotten just how unpopular Miletich was with the UFC's fans and their brass. Few had forgotten the horrifying sight of Miletich grabbing Mikey Burnett's shorts for 21 sleep-inducing minutes at UFC Brazil. Miletich cemented a reputation as a boring fighter that night, one he never completely escaped. Once he lost the title, the UFC was intent that he wouldn't regain it. A young welterweight stud was lurking at Miletich's camp, a stud named **Matt Hughes**. When **Zuffa** took over the UFC, they were looking for Hughes to represent his camp in a title shot with Newton. After a three-year reign as champion, there would be no rematch.

A demoralized Miletich tried to take things in stride. He moved up to 185 pounds, but was never given a chance to develop slowly at this new weight. He was immediately thrown in with Olympic silver medalist **Matt Lindland**, who used his size and wrestling prowess to overwhelm Pat on the ground. Miletich was physically beaten up; 34 years old and convinced his opportunities to compete at the top of his natural weight class were long gone, Pat called it quits. It wasn't worth sticking around for a paycheck in those days — the paychecks just weren't that good. It was Miletich's last fight for the UFC, a sad end for a great champion.

In Their Own Words: Jens Pulver on Pat Miletich's ability as a trainer

"People always ask for Pat's secret ingredient. There wasn't no secret ingredient. That's why I made that comment about our 'supposed leader.' There was no one leader, man. We all did it together. Jeremy Horn was the leader when it comes down to it. We all ran after that guy. We all said, 'Teach us coach.' Everyone always thought Pat had a magical touch and was teaching us all these magical things. No, he wasn't. No. Never. Never ever. It was a great combination of things that left. Jeremy left, Matt [Hughes] left, Robbie [Lawler] left. Matt Pena left. Everybody grew up more or less. We weren't there anymore. And that's why the great experiment is over."

To make things worse, even Miletich's past exploits have essentially been erased from UFC history. Miletich joined up with the fledgling **International Fight League** where he coached two teams to championships and made an ill-fated return to the ring against Renzo Gracie. Doing so was tantamount to declaring war on **Dana White** and the UFC, a situation that only escalated when Miletich gave a scathing anti-UFC deposition in a lawsuit between the two promotions.

Today, Miletich continues to train fighters at his gym in Bettendorf. No longer the home of champions, the camp still produces a number of UFC-caliber fighters, insuring Miletich will be seen, but never mentioned, in the corner during UFC broadcasts for years to come.

Miller, Jason

Nickname: Mayhem

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 12/24/80

Debut: Rage in the Cage 27 (4/28/01)

Career Record: 23-7 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Denis Kang (Extreme Challenge 50); Egan Inoue (SuperBrawl 32);

Robbie Lawler (Icon Sport: Mayhem vs. Lawler); Tim Kennedy (HDNet Fights: Reckless Abandon)

Notable Losses: Tim Kennedy (Extreme Challenge 50); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 52);

Frank Trigg (Icon Sport: Mayhem vs. Trigg); Ronaldo de Souza (Dream 4); Jake Shields (Strikeforce: Fedor vs. Rogers)

By his own assertion, Jason Miller is a pro wrestler. Not according to the usual definition — there are no worked matches, no flying elbows off the top of the cage. But to the extent that virtually everything Jason Miller says or does is calculated to entertain fans and create a persona, there's really no other way to describe what he does. The masked, machete-wielding entrances, the in-ring antics, the goofy mugging; that's **pro wrestling** all over.

Although Miller claims to have been competing in 1997 (note that he also claims “Parts Unknown” as his hometown), there's no record of him in action before 2001. His big break came two years later in a fight he was supposed to lose. Miller was invited to Honolulu to be an easy win for Egan Inoue, a Hawaiian star who'd just dropped his SuperBrawl title and needed to get back on track. In the first round, Inoue nearly ended the fight with a deep **Kimura**, but Miller escaped after an incredible sequence of four forward rolls to relieve the pressure. By the end of the first, though, Miller controlled Inoue in **rear mount**, and literally spanked him, which didn't exactly endear him to the Honolulu crowd. A round later, when an obviously injured Inoue was unable to continue, a smiling, strutting, and *break-dancing* Miller instantly became the SuperBrawl (later Icon) promotion's most hated man. That is, until several headlining bouts later, when the crowd slowly caught on to Miller's act. He wasn't a bad guy — he was an entertainer playing the role of the pro wrestling heel.

Miller had the misfortune of making his lone **UFC** appearance against **Georges St. Pierre** in the French Canadian's first fight after his loss to **Matt Hughes**. St. Pierre's pre-fight comments were on the mark: nobody *could* handle his rhythm. Despite his corner's exhortations (“Retard strength, Jason! Retard strength!”), Miller took a hellacious beating from the future welterweight champ. It's a testament to his toughness that he was able to go the distance against the clearly superior athlete.

Although his colorful act seemed perfect for Japan, where style is worth at least as much as substance, it wasn't until 2008 that Miller made his Japanese debut. In the opening round of the **Dream** middleweight (185 pounds) Grand Prix, Miller made short work of Katsuyori Shibata, an actual, honest-to-goodness, fake-fights-and-everything pro wrestler, and earned a date with “Jacaré” — **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** world champion Ronaldo de Souza. Although Miller is no slouch on the ground, Jacaré is almost without peer, and the Brazilian pressured Mayhem constantly en route to a unanimous decision win. Their heated rematch at Dream 9 ended in controversy, as an illegal kick to the downed de Souza opened a nasty cut and ended the bout in a no contest. Mayhem/Jacaré III seems an inevitability, but

In Their Own Words: Mayhem Miller on his illegal kick to Ronaldo de Souza

"It was a mistake. Jacaré calls me a clown and disrespects me all the time, head butted me and opened a cut on my eye. If he could've done it to me, he would have. I'll beat the shit out of him legally next time. What's he gonna do? Submit me? LOL Kayo me? LMMFAO.

"Brazilian nuthuggers can suck my mother fuckin dick that gets more pussy than any one of you could imagine, due to my MTV show, my good looks, and my tons of money.

"How is that for classy? Oh, you know what, I don't give a fuck what you think, I'm the fucking man. Hey [Underground poster] CRE, what was your down syndrome Brazilian gonna break? NOTHING. Bitch ass had me on the ground for 3 seconds.

"Let me get my bread for fucking him up in a rematch, and watch you all cry about how I 'don't respect the sport.' In the words of **Dana White**, 'Fuck you you fucking cunt.'

"Go jerk off to **TUF**."

(from **The Underground**)

there's no telling how long fans might have to wait. Miller is a busy man, splitting his time between his fighting career, his hosting duties on MTV's reality series *Bully Beatdown*, and trolling MMA message boards with his absolutely first-rate puerile rants.

Minowa, Ikuhisa

Nickname: Minowaman (formerly The Punk)

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 181 lbs

Born: 1/12/72

Debut: Lumax Cup Tournament of J '96 (3/30/96)

Career Record: 46-30-8

Notable Wins: Phil Baroni (Pride Bushido 9); Eric "Butterbean" Esch (Pride Bushido 12); Don Frye (Deep: Gladiator); Bob Sapp (Dream 9); Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou (Dynamite!! 2009)

Notable Losses: Phil Baroni (Pride Bushido 7); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride Shockwave 2005); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Total Elimination Absolute)

Ikuhisa Minowa, better known these days as "Minowaman," identified his fighting style as **professional wrestling** long before ever having worked a

professional wrestling match as most of us would understand the term. This tells you almost everything you need to know about the red-trunked, intensely mulleted Ikuhisa Minowa's approach to MMA.

An entertainer first and a competitor second, Minowa became a Japanese crowd favorite with his flair for the dramatic, his use of pro wrestling-style dropkicks in legitimate fights, and his willingness to fight opponents twice his size. While his back-and-forth Bushido battles against **Phil Baroni** showed Minowa at his fighting best, it was his freak show bouts against the likes of **Giant Silva**, Butterbean, Zuluzinho, and **Bob Sapp** that made his reputation. Minowa has clearly gotten the most out of a career that began somewhat ingloriously: he won only twice in his first 13 contests for **Pancrase**, his home for six years and an incredible 41 fights.

A Minowaman of diverse talents, Minowa delivered a lecture at the Kanezawa Hakkei Campus of Kanto Gakuin University in 2006 titled, "About Real — Ultramodern — New Style — Superhuman." "If you think about the time from the big bang until now," Minowa suggested, "the very moment we are living in is, without a doubt, Ultramodern." That much seems irrefutable. He went on to explain that "if you want to be Superhuman, you have to completely exceed your genetics. I'm still testing it, but if I can make my genes 100 percent complete, I will start a revolution in, and outside of, my brain." A hopeful world awaits.

Mir, Frank

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 245 lbs

Born: 5/24/79

Debut: HOOKnSHOOT: Showdown (7/14/01)

Career Record: 13-5

Notable Wins: Pete Williams (UFC 36); Tank Abbott (UFC 41); Tim Sylvia (UFC 48); Brock Lesnar (UFC 81); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (UFC 92)

Notable Losses: Ian Freeman (UFC 38); Brandon Vera (UFC 65); Brock Lesnar (UFC 100); Shane Carwin (UFC 109)

For Frank Mir, fighting is a family affair. His first teacher was his father, a Kenpo **karate** instructor who taught him how to punch and kick. The Mirs thought they knew how to fight. It wasn't until father and son saw the first **UFC** that they realized how little they understood about a real fight. **Royce Gracie** had made it clear that standup striking alone wasn't enough to be successful against the world's toughest men.

Mir turned his attention to grappling, winning a high school **wrestling** championship and becoming a black belt in **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**. This superla-

tive grappling skill, combined with his years of karate, formed a potent combination, a fast track to success.

Mir was pushed to the top of the sport with a shocking speed. UFC matchmaker **Joe Silva** saw him train and encouraged him to take up the sport as a professional. After just two tune-up fights, Mir was in the UFC, amazing the world with a submission win over highly touted jiu-jitsu artist Roberto Traven.

Mir had the look the UFC was pushing at the time, a clean-cut all-American boyishness that also led the promotion to get behind **Rich Franklin** and **Matt Hughes**. The sport was still under attack by fierce critics. The UFC thought it was important to be able to counter attacks with clean-cut, articulate fighters explaining what the sport was all about.

Mir got a plum spot, opposite returning legend **Tank Abbott**. Abbott was a great personality, but one who talked better than he fought. It was a foregone conclusion, at least for people who followed the sport closely, that Mir would walk away victorious. He tapped the Tank with a **toe hold** and a star was born.

After a bizarre feud with **Wes Sims** that saw Sims disqualified for illegally stomping a prone Mir in the head, Mir was fighting for the UFC title after just eight professional fights. Across the cage at UFC 48 was the mammoth champion, **Pat Miletich**-trained **Tim Sylvia**. Sylvia was a 6'8" giant who used his long reach to keep opponents at bay with a jab and a careful style that minimized risk. Mir's only hope was getting the champ down and tapping him out. Minutes into the bout, Mir trapped Sylvia's right arm and looked to finish the fight. Sylvia was defending when referee **Herb Dean** jumped in to stop the contest. Sylvia, the crowd, and UFC President **Dana White** were all furious. Then they



In Their Own Words: Frank Mir on the motorcycle accident that changed his life

"I had enjoyed being an athlete my whole life. After the accident I was hobbling around and I lost a lot of my identity. I went from being one of the top martial artists in the world to being a guy who might not ever be able to fight again. It took me four years to get back to where I was before the wreck. There were several times I was in the UFC front office begging not to be cut. I was one decision, one breath, away from never having my career again.

"A lot of times, when people get hurt, it's because they don't fear something. Fear is a very healthy thing. I'm afraid every time I step in the cage. All my losses occurred when I got a certain level of arrogance and wasn't afraid anymore. When I got hit by the car, I was so comfortable on my bike that I literally had my forearm on the gas tank and was just chilling. Being comfortable in the situation allowed me to be hurt. I haven't forgotten that lesson."

saw the replay. Instead of an early stoppage, Dean was right on time. Mir had actually broken Sylvia's arm. The adrenaline coursing through his brain hadn't let his body tell his mind yet. Mir was the new heavyweight champion.

Then, disaster struck. Cruising on his motorcycle down Sahara Avenue in his hometown of Las Vegas, Nevada, Mir was on top of the world. He was on his way to work, still providing security at the Spearmint Rhino strip club, thinking about his upcoming wedding. He never saw the car coming. Mir went flying more than 70 feet, snapping his leg in half.

It looked, for a time, like Mir would never recover. His return was sad to see. After 18 months of rest and rehab, Mir was still not the fighter he had been. He lost his return fight with Marcio Cruz at UFC 57, struggled with the unheralded Dan Christison, and was embarrassed by prospect **Brandon Vera**. There were whispers he wouldn't be able to get medical clearance to fight anymore. The old Frank Mir was gone, buried under a layer of blubber and self-doubt.

It was this past-his-prime Mir that was selected to be the first opponent for UFC megastar **Brock Lesnar** at UFC 81. Lesnar was a former professional wrestler who had strong amateur credentials but almost no experience. Mir, a talented grappler, caught Lesnar at exactly the right time in his career. Lesnar was dominating the fight, tossing Mir around and pounding him, when the wily veteran caught him in a **knee bar** out of nowhere.

The Lesnar fight reinvigorated Mir's career. He and **Pride** legend **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** were opposing coaches on the eighth season of ***The Ultimate***

Fighter. After the season they fought for the interim UFC heavyweight championship, vacated by **Randy Couture** during a contract dispute. Mir knocked out the legend in the second round, just the second knockout of his career.

The stars had aligned for the UFC. Mir was the interim champion, while Lesnar dispatched of a returning Couture to win the heavyweight crown. Two titles demanded a title unification bout, a rematch between two men who legitimately disliked each other. Mir was a martial artist who didn't appreciate Lesnar's pro wrestling theatrics and what he thought was an undeserved opportunity.

It was the biggest fight in UFC history. UFC 100 sold out before tickets ever hit the street. Its 1.6 million pay-per-view buys were the most ever, by a significant margin. Lesnar was the biggest star the sport had seen and Mir was a great foil. The difference was the additional year and a half Lesnar had to study the submission game. This time he blitzed Mir, easily beating him in the second round to become the undisputed champion.

Misaki, Kazuo

Nickname: Grabaka Hitman

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 183 lbs

Born: 4/25/76

Debut: Pancrase Neo-Blood Tournament (5/5/01)

Career Record: 22-10-2 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Phil Baroni (Pride Bushido 11); Dan Henderson (Pride Bushido 12); Denis Kang (Pride Bushido 13); Joe Riggs (Strikeforce: At the Mansion II)

Notable Losses: Nate Marquardt (Pancrase: Spirit 3, Pancrase: Brave 10); Dan Henderson (Pride Bushido 10); Paulo Filho (Pride Bushido 13); Frank Trigg (Pride Bushido 33)

There are the wins, over the likes of one-time middleweight stand-out **Denis Kang** and the great **Dan Henderson**. There are the losses, against top competition like **Nate Marquardt** and the enigmatic **Paulo Filho**. There are the strange twists of fate, like a **Pride** welterweight (183 pounds) Grand Prix championship that came on the same night Misaki was eliminated from the tournament. And there's scandal: a conviction and three-year suspended sentence for a hit-and-run on a Tokyo police officer. But for **Grabaka** fighter Kazuo Misaki, for all the ups and downs, there's really only one night: New Year's Eve 2007.

It was as much a morality play as it was a fight. **Yoshihiro Akiyama** was the most hated man in Japanese MMA, loathed by the fans for cheating **Kazushi Sakuraba** a year to the day earlier, when he illegally greased himself to avoid

the grappler's takedowns. For one night, Kazuo Misaki was the avenger, the man who was going to punish Akiyama for his misdeed. Although their bout didn't go on last, this fight was the true main event of Yarennoka!, an unofficial farewell to **Pride**. The Saitama fans jeered like never before as Akiyama and his cornermen kneeled and bowed on their way to the ring to the familiar strains of "Con Te Partiro"; they exploded when Misaki bounced down the aisle to the pounding beat of The Mad Capsule Markets.

The bout between two expert grapplers turned into a heated kickboxing contest, the crowd hanging on every blow. When Akiyama floored Misaki with a quick one-two midway through the long first round, it looked like the villain might prevail, but Misaki fought to his feet, and soon thereafter landed a solid left hook that staggered Akiyama. When Misaki connected with a vicious kick to the scrambling Akiyama's head and the referee dove between them to stop the fight, the crowd was rapturous.

"You betrayed the trust of many fans and children, and it is something that I cannot overlook," Misaki lectured a woozy Akiyama in a strange scene at the center of the ring. "But you fought well tonight and you showed heart. From this point forth, I want to see you put your sincerity and a feeling of apology into fighting for the fans and the children."

Misaki's kick was later judged to have connected while Akiyama was still technically in the four-points, grounded position, and the bout was rightly ruled a no contest. But that night in Saitama, it seemed like something akin to justice.

M-1 Global

When **Fedor Emelianenko** was negotiating a contract with the **UFC** in 2009, the deal killer was an unusual request: Fedor wanted his fights to be co-promoted by M-1 Global. This was ridiculed in the MMA media. After all, what could M-1 offer the UFC behemoth? It was assumed that they had little promotional experience; that couldn't have been further from the truth. M-1 has been promoting events worldwide for over a decade. Although they haven't yet become a global powerhouse, the group has done a tremendous job laying the groundwork for the coming MMA explosion in Europe and particularly in Russia. They have also co-promoted major events with **Affliction** and **Strikeforce** featuring Emelianenko in a starring role.

M-1 Global's flagship event is its M-1 Challenge series. The competition is similar to the **International Fight League's** approach, picking up where that defunct promotion left off. It's a team-based competition featuring athletes from around the world. Instead of dividing the fighters into teams based on the

camps they train out of, the M-1 Challenge is more like the MMA Olympics (actually billed as the “World Cup” of MMA). The teams feature fighters from 13 countries. Each team has fighters in five weight classes, competing in best of five meets, with the winner being the first team to reach three victories. It’s a great promotion for some of the very best young fighters in the world to get their feet wet in international competition, building fighters and a new generation of stars with television contracts in almost 100 countries worldwide.

Monson, Jeff

Nickname: The Snowman

Height: 5’9”

Weight: 247 lbs

Born: 1/18/71

Debut: UFCF: Night of Champions (3/14/98)

Career Record: 31-8

Notable Wins: Kazuyuki Fujita (Pride 34); Ricco Rodriguez (Mixed Fighting Alliance: There Will Be Blood); Roy Nelson (SRP: March Madness); Sergei Kharitonov (Dream 8)

Notable Losses: Chuck Liddell (UFC 29); Ricco Rodriguez (UFC 35); Forrest Griffin (WEFC 1); Tim Sylvia (UFC 65); Pedro Rizzo (Art of War 3); Josh Barnett (Sengoku 2)

Jeff Monson is a fierce competitor inside the cage. But that’s where he thinks the competition should end. “We walk out of the ring, or the cage; the fight should be over,” Monson told Wisconsin Combat Sports. “When it comes to living, we shouldn’t have to compete with each other.” Ask him about his politics, and he’ll tell you he’s a libertarian communist, an anarchist, opposed to any and all social institutions that promote or maintain class divisions. Ask him if he feels his radical politics set him apart from his fellow fighters, and he’ll tell you no, fundamentally they’re all just wage slaves in this thing together. But there’s a sense in which the MMA world doesn’t quite know what to make of Monson. Consider longtime **UFC** commentator **Mike Goldberg**. As Jeff Monson stepped into the cage to challenge **Tim Sylvia**’s heavyweight title at UFC 65, here’s the best the well-meaning Goldberg could manage: “He’s a very political, socio-economic dude, who comes from a middle-class background, and wants to make a statement inside the Octagon here tonight.” Not Goldberg’s finest moment.

Monson’s politics are by their nature controversial. But whether or not you respect the tenets of Jeff Monson’s anarchism or his strident pacifism, you’ve got to respect his honesty. Unlike many athletes who deny the use of performance enhancing drugs even after multiple positive tests, Monson, who has never failed a drug test, readily admits to past use of performance enhancing drugs, and, in a position consistent with his politics, argues that they should be legalized. In the current **steroid**-mad cultural climate, that borders on sedition.



Monson wrestled at the University of Illinois, earning a bachelor's degree in psychology; graduate work and a master's degree from the University of Minnesota at Duluth followed. After four years of working in mental health services and fighting part time, Monson took the plunge and committed himself fully to MMA as a career. An **ADCC** submission **wrestling** champion and **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt, Monson put together an impressive string of 16 consecutive wins — many by way of his signature **north-south** choke — that included UFC triumphs over Branden Lee Hinkle, Anthony Perosh, and his rival from the world of submission grappling, Marcio “Pe de Pano” Cruz.

And so a shot at the ever unpopular Tim Sylvia, an enormous, lumbering, sad sack heavyweight champion whose cautious style and woe-is-me demeanor made him singularly unlikable among UFC headliners. But the biggest fight of Monson's career turned out to be something of a dud. An 11-inch height difference proved too much for Monson to overcome — he was comically unable to reach Sylvia's head while punching from **guard** in the third round (the only round Monson won). The fight ground to such a standstill that referee **John McCarthy** stopped the action (such as it was) in the fifth round to remind them, “This is a fight, and you guys gotta *fight*.”

Upon his own request, Monson was released from his UFC contract after he came up short in his title challenge, and has stayed busy since, taking fights in both high profile Japanese promotions (**Pride**, **Dream**, and **Sengoku**) and obscure American organizations. He's quietly put together the kind of winning streak that earned him his last shot in the UFC, and could very well land him there again. That is, if he can stay out of jail: after an *ESPN: The Magazine* profile included a photograph of Monson spray-painting an anarchist symbol and scrawling the words "no war" and "no poverty" on the Washington State Capitol, he pled guilty to a charge of malicious mischief and entered an Alford plea on a charge of graffiti. No stranger to the importance of a judge's decision, this one ultimately fell his way: Monson avoided jail time for what his lawyer characterized as "an act of conscience."

Mount

A dominant ground fighting position in which the attacker straddles his opponent's torso, anywhere from the hips to the chest, with knees tight against his opponent's sides. The widely used term "mount" comes to us from **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** and the Portuguese montada; the position is classically known as *tate-shiho gatame* (upright four-quarters hold) in **judo**. As *ne-waza* (ground technique) expert Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki notes, "The intrinsic quality of the technique is very high, though it is quite difficult to master."



Broadly speaking, the attacker has three options from the mounted position: (i) he can stay low and tight to his opponent for maximum control; (ii) he can work towards a variety of arm locks (**arm bar**, **Kimura/Americana**) or chokes (**arm triangle**, **Ezequiel**, **triangle**, **gogoplata**); or (iii) he can posture up and deliver punches and elbows to which his supine opponent can offer only minimal defense. Strikes from the mount often cause the opponent to turn to the prone position, allowing the attacker to secure **rear mount**, another dominant position.

There are a number of escapes available to the mounted fighter. He can attempt to bridge and roll into the mounting fighter's **guard**, or twist and shrimp onto his side such that he can reestablish his own **half-guard** and, eventually, guard. If the attacker is sitting high on the mounted fighter's chest and his balance is poor, the mounted fighter can buck up and scramble out the back door (between the attacker's legs). But every escape is complicated by the steady stream of shots to the head that tends to come along with being on the wrong end of the mount. The mounted fighter absolutely must improve his position — and quickly.

See also **positional hierarchy**

Mousasi, Gegard

Nickname: The Dreamcatcher

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 8/1/85

Debut: 2H2H: 1st Open Team Mixfight Championships (4/27/03)

Career Record: 29-3-1

Notable Wins: Hector Lombard (Pride Bushido 13); Denis Kang (Dream 2); Melvin Manhoef (Dream 6); Ronaldo Souza (Dream 6); Mark Hunt (Dream 9); Renato Sobral (Strikeforce: Carono vs. Cyborg)

Notable Losses: Akihiro Gono (Pride Bushido 12); Muhammed Lawal (Strikeforce: Nashville)

After running into trouble against tough veteran **Akihiro Gono** in his first real test, Gegard Mousasi ran off 15 wins in a row against some of the world's best. The young Armenian star became one of the sport's top prospects, winning the **Dream** Middleweight Grand Prix and then stepping up in weight and making his mark on the light heavyweight division as well.

Mousasi, highly coveted by the **UFC**, signed with **Strikeforce** instead and won the promotion's light heavyweight title over former UFC star **Renato Sobral**. Many fans were putting him in the same class as the sport's very best,

In Their Own Words: Gegard Mousasi on MMA's prospects in Europe

"A celebrity? I don't think I am one. In the Netherlands they like sports like cycling, darts, and ice skating – there isn't any interest in MMA. There is a big difference with countries like the USA and Japan. It won't be big in Europe. Maybe in countries like Great Britain and Germany because the combat sport is popular there, like boxing."

but **"King Mo" Lawal** put an end to that talk with a smothering win to take Mousasi's title. If the Netherlands-based fighter is going to regain his title, or make his mark in the UFC down the road, it's clear that he had better learn some wrestling first.

Muay Thai

There's no substitute for good old-fashioned western **boxing** for training the hands, but no single striking art has proven itself more valuable in the context of mixed martial arts than Muay Thai. The Art of Eight Limbs — hands, shins, elbows, knees — has a storied Thai history stretching from the era of Muay Boran (literally "ancient boxing") to the modern heroes of Bangkok's sweltering Lumpinee Boxing Stadium who take to the ring every Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evening. But the Muay Thai fighters who have made their mark most indelibly in MMA thus far have fought out of Brazil. Curitiba, Brazil, to be precise, and Master Rudimar Fedrigo's **Chute Boxe** Academy, which has produced many of the most dangerous strikers in the history of the sport, **Wanderlei Silva**, **Mauricio Rua**, and **Anderson Silva** foremost among them. Watch them turn their hips powerfully into the low kicks that chip away at their opponents' mobility, the body kicks that punish the ribs and bring their opponents hands down to their side, readying them for the thunderous head kicks that lay them out. Witness Anderson Silva's outrageous reverse elbow knockout of Tony Fryklund, catching him with a technique that would seem at home in Tony Jaa's *Ong Bak: Muay Thai Warrior*. See Wanderlei work **Quinton Jackson** over with knees from the clinch, or Anderson do the same to **Rich Franklin**, rearranging his facial features with a single blow. Or take a look at Rua's classic Muay Thai stance — left arm high, right hand at his cheek, chin low, light lead leg springing off the mat — as it contrasts to **Lyoto Machida's** upright **karate** stance in their light heavyweight title bout at **UFC 104**. It might not be Lumpinee, but it's not half bad.



Nakamura, Kazuhiro

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 7/16/79

Debut: Pride 25 (3/16/03)

Career Record: 15-10

Notable Wins: Murilo Bustamante (Pride Final Conflict 2004); Kevin Randleman (Pride Total Elimination 2005); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride Final Conflict 2005); Yuki Kondo (Pride Shockwave 2005); Hidehiko Yoshida (Astra)

Notable Losses: Wanderlei Silva (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Josh Barnett (Pride 31); Mauricio Rua (Pride Shockwave 2006); Lyoto Machida (UFC 76); Kazuo Misaki (Sengoku 9)

When Kazuhiro Nakamura tested positive for marijuana after his **UFC 76** loss to the elusive **Lyoto Machida**, it confirmed something many of us had suspected for quite some time: Kazuhiro Nakamura is a guy wants to do **judo** and get high, and not necessarily in that order. The giant blue penguins that accompanied Nakamura to the ring in his **Pride** days were one hint. The ornate kimonos, umbrellas, and traditional jingasa hats coupled with respiratory masks and hitched-up floral print shorts that defined his UFC-era fashion sense were another. Now there could be no doubt. It should be noted that Nakamura protested the results of the drug test, but — well, come on.

A Yoshida Dojo fighter, Nakamura began competing in MMA after a successful judo career that saw him win a handful of minor international tournaments and place as high as an impressive third in the Japanese national championships (100 kg). He entered the Pride ring still very much in his athletic prime at age 24, and, perhaps because of this, Nakamura managed to adapt his judo throwing techniques to MMA much more fluidly than his mentor **Hidehiko Yoshida**, the vastly more accomplished judo player. Nakamura succeeded not just with inside and outside trips, but the dramatic hip and shoulder throws that one most associates with judo. Combine that ability with the smooth, calm groundwork he showed in his early bouts, and it

seemed like the sky was the limit.

Except it totally wasn't. After an impressive debut in a losing effort to submission expert **Antonio Rogerio Nogueira**, Nakamura picked up solid wins over former UFC champions **Murilo Bustamante** and **Kevin Randleman** before facing **Wanderlei Silva** in what is in many ways the defining bout of Nakamura's career. Five minutes into a competitive fight, in which Nakamura was, shockingly, holding his own on his feet against one of the most feared strikers in the sport, Nakamura decided to undress, to remove his strange, short-sleeved **gi** jacket — *while the match continued*. This was, of course, an absolutely terrible idea. Nakamura was promptly floored, mounted, and pounded out.

The best one can say about the baffling ordeal that is Kazuhiro Nakamura's career is that he has fought some of the best in world at 205 pounds, often quite competitively. But he is without question on the outside of that group looking in. Cut from the UFC following back-to-back losses, Nakamura has found a home in the middleweight (190 pounds) division of **Sengoku**.

Nastula, Pawel

Height: 6'

Weight: 235 lbs

Born: 6/26/70

Debut: Pride Critical Countdown 2005 (6/26/05)

Career Record: 1-4

Notable Losses: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Aleksander Emelianenko (Pride Shockwave 2005); Josh Barnett (Pride 32)

When Pawel Nastula stepped into the **Pride** ring on his 35th birthday to face heavyweight legend **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, it marked the debut of the most accomplished international **judo** player to try his hand at mixed martial arts. The 1995 and 1997 world and 1996 Olympic judo champion in the 95-kilogram division, Nastula amassed an astounding streak of 312 consecutive wins over nearly four years, all the while battling top international competition. And so there was no slow build to Nastula's MMA career: he was immediately thrust into the sport's highest level.

He didn't fare well. An inexperienced and overmatched Nastula was stopped by Nogueira, and he was finished in subsequent fights by heavyweight contenders **Aleksander Emelianenko** and **Josh Barnett** as well. His only professional win came over one-dimensional striker Edson Draggo. While there's no shame in any of that, there's at least a little in this: following the Barnett fight, notably the only time Nastula has fought under the auspices of a state athletic commission, Nastula tested positive not only for **steroids** but

for three banned stimulants as well. The usual denials followed.

After the demise of Pride, Nastula found his way to **Sengoku**, where he faced undefeated Korean fighter Dong Yi Yang in a bout that saw one of the sport's all-time baffling finishes. Yang, who was penalized for a series of blows to the groin in the first round, was nearly caught in a Nastula **arm bar** in the second. Yang escaped and scrambled back to his feet, while Nastula was slow to rise. Nastula indicated some problem with his protective cup to the referee. To Nastula's protests, the fight was stopped and awarded to Yang. Although officially recorded as a TKO, Nastula seems to be the first fighter to have lost a bout due to an arm bar *escape*, the lone distinction in Nastula's disappointing foray into mixed martial arts.

Nelson, Roy

Nickname: Big Country	Height: 6'
Weight: 264 lbs	Born: 6/20/76
Debut: Rage on the River (4/17/04)	Career Record: 15-5
Notable Wins: Antoine Jaoude (IFL: World Grand Prix Finals); Brad Imes (IFL: Connecticut); Kimbo Slice (<i>The Ultimate Fighter</i> 10)	
Notable Losses: Ben Rothwell (IFL: Moline); Andrei Arlovski (EliteXC: Heat); Jeff Monson (SRP: March Badness); Junior dos Santos (UFC 117)	

Roy Nelson wants you to know that he's kind of a big deal. After his appearance on the tenth season of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** — in particular his first-round drubbing of **Kimbo Slice** in the fourth most-watched MMA fight in U.S. history — you're probably already aware of how much game Nelson manages to pack into that enormous, frowning, pendulous belly. Somehow, neither **Quinton**

In Their Own Words: Roy Nelson on what he learned from Ken Shamrock

“The one thing you have to respect about Ken is that he gets the whole entertainment side of the MMA business. That’s one thing he showed me. You don’t have to be the greatest fighter out there to make money in this sport. Myself, I’ve got a double bonus. I can fight and I can also entertain. I just try to be myself. Normally I’m a shy person, so I just try to put myself out there a little bit more. And a lot of times there are things that need to be said and nobody will say it. I don’t mind being the mouthpiece.”

Jackson nor **Rashad Evans** seemed to know much about Nelson's past as an IFL champion when they were selecting their teams. Maybe they just didn't care. But either way, the **Renzo Gracie** black belt somehow ended up the ninth pick out of an undistinguished group of 16 despite having gone the distance with the likes of **Jeff Monson** and "Big" Ben Rothwell.

With his decent hands, technical grappling, and surprising quickness, agility, and cardio for a man of his truly remarkable girth, Nelson is a tough night for anyone in the heavyweight division — even former **UFC** champion **Andrei Arlovski**. Nelson put Arlovski on his back in the first round of their **EliteXC** contest, and thoroughly outmaneuvered him on the ground before the fighters were inexplicably stood up despite Nelson threatening with a **Kimura** from well-established **side control**. It was an absurd call that cost him dearly, as he was tagged in the second and stopped for the first time in his career.

Nelson's entry into the **UFC**'s heavyweight division was long overdue, and his win over the notorious Kimbo in front of an audience of millions helped prove that he's for real. Still, no matter how often you see Nelson perform, no matter how much skill he shows every time out there, you can't help but think about that belly. "That's a big belly," Quinton Jackson once said, with an air of almost philosophical consideration. "The biggest belly I ever seen."

Newton, Carlos

Nickname: The Ronin

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 8/17/76

Debut: EF 2 (4/26/96)

Career Record: 15-14

Notable Wins: Erik Paulson (Vale Tudo Japan 97); Pat Miletich (UFC 31); Jose Landi-Jons (Pride 19); Renzo Gracie (Pride Bushido 1); Shonie Carter (Warrior 1)

Notable Losses: Dan Henderson (UFC 17); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 3); Dave Menne (Warriors War 1); Matt Hughes (UFC 34, UFC 38); Renzo Gracie (IFL: Championship Final); Matt Lindland (IFL: Houston)

First and foremost, Carlos Newton fought beautifully. Both in victory — a back-from-the-brink submission win over Jose Landi-Jons, a title-fight upset over the great tactician **Pat Miletich** — and in defeat — slammed unconscious by a choked-out **Matt Hughes**, back and forth on the mat with a prime **Kazushi Sakuraba** — Newton was part of some of the greatest contests in the history of mixed martial arts. But Newton, who started young and peaked early, saw considerable decline after a brief fling with the **UFC** welterweight title, and

In Their Own Words: Carlos Newton on his UFC 34 match with Matt Hughes

"I won that fight. I know I did. Because Matt told me, pretty much, 'Yeah, I was out.' He made it pretty clear to me that he thought it was a lucky break. That fight was a great fight and it shows why this sport is so appealing. It's so unpredictable. You have to consider so many variables. At the end of the day, when a guy really does dominate in this sport, he isn't just the better man. He's the guy that has the wind to his back, making it happen."

never regained the form that saw him rise to the top of the MMA world before his 25th birthday.

Fittingly known as "The Ronin," Newton had no particular fight camp or even primary discipline with which he was associated throughout his career. As a teenager he began his study of traditional Japanese jiu-jitsu, **Judo**, and general submission fighting that would form the basis of his self-styled "Dragon Ball Jiu-jitsu" at Moni Aizik's Samurai Club in Richmond Hill, Ontario. It would be easy to look at the slightly goofy name Newton gave his fighting style, the kame hame ha anime theatrics that followed each win, or the spectacularly ill-advised Afro-wigged "Bootylicious" entrance at **UFC 34**, and think Newton was, if not a joke, something less than completely serious. But that notion would be easily dispelled by watching any of his early fights. His 41-second dismantling of Erik Paulson — double-leg takedown, **side control**, **mount**, **arm bar** — in what was only Newton's second career bout would be as good a place to start as any.

Newton made his debut in the big time, such as it was in 1998, at **UFC 17** in Mobile, Alabama, as part of a one-night middleweight (205 pounds) tournament that saw the first UFC appearances of both **Dan Henderson** and, in a reserve bout, **Chuck Liddell**. In his opening round bout, the undersized but technically superior Newton made short work of Bob Gilstrap, catching him in a **triangle choke** in the first minute. A narrow, split decision loss to Henderson in a barnburner of a tournament final took nothing away from the seemingly unlimited potential on display from the 22-year-old that night.

Newton followed that performance with an absolute classic in his next fight. His **Pride 3** bout against Kazushi Sakuraba was a wide open, fluid grappling contest that has yet to be equaled in the decade since. Both fighters slipped into and out of submission attempt after attempt until Sakuraba threatened with a **toe hold**, setting up the tight **knee bar** that ended the fight.

Success in Pride and **Shooto** led to a UFC welterweight title shot against Pat Miletich, who was undefeated in the Octagon in seven fights, four of them title defenses. In the third round, Newton seized on an uncharacteristic, momentary lapse on Miletich's part, and secured the rarely seen bulldog or schoolyard choke to become the UFC's youngest champion. His reign would be brief, however, and it would end in controversy.

In the second round of Newton's first title defense at UFC 34, it looked like Newton had Matt Hughes where he wanted him. Newton threw up his legs in a triangle choke attempt, trapping Hughes' head and one of his arms, but the choke wasn't fully applied — Newton's leg wasn't *quite* in the right position across the back of Hughes' neck. Hughes knew he was in trouble, and although he wasn't able to break the hold, he managed to stand and lift Newton over his head, backed up against the cage, as Newton made the final adjustments to the triangle. What followed looked more like a **pro wrestling** powerbomb than anything else. Newton was out, but so was Hughes — he'd been choked out standing. Understandably, referee **John McCarthy** awarded the match — and the title — to the fighter who *wasn't* flat on his back, the victim of a massive slam. When Hughes regained himself, moments later, he seemed as surprised as anyone to learn that he'd won.

A rematch naturally followed, but this time the finish was far more decisive: Hughes established side control, trapped one of Newton's arms between his legs, and pounded his way to a stoppage in the fourth round. Between those two Hughes fights, Newton managed to squeeze in another classic, a Pride bout against Jose "Pele" Landi-Jons. The grappler overcame the fear-some striker to finish with a beautiful arm bar.

Aside from two fine technical matches with fellow **International Fight League** coach **Renzo Gracie** — a split decision win in 2003, a split decision loss in 2006 — things have not gone well for Carlos Newton in either the ring or the cage. The fighter who seemed so promising in his mid-twenties looked washed-up by 30. Granted, Newton has pursued other avenues and interests to a much greater extent than most professional athletes: plans to undertake a career in medicine eventually yielded to the study of architecture, his current passion and pursuit, and he's found financial security outside the fight game. It's impossible to find fault with a fighter taking steps to prepare for a time when the bright lights have faded. Still, you can't help but wonder what kind of fighter Carlos Newton could have been had the soft-spoken Ronin found a first-rate group of training partners in his prime, and dedicated himself to the sport full-time. You can't help but wonder how many more classics we might have seen.

Nogueira, Antonio Rodrigo

Nicknames: Minotauro, Big Nog

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 235 lbs

Born: 6/2/76

Debut: WEF 5 (6/12/99)

Career Record: 32-6-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Jeremy Horn (WEF 8); Mark Coleman (Pride 16); Heath Herring (Pride 17, Pride Critical Countdown 2004, UFC 73); Bob Sapp (Pride Shockwave); Dan Henderson (Pride 24); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Final Conflict 2003); Josh Barnett (Pride Shockwave 2006); Tim Sylvia (UFC 81); Randy Couture (UFC 102)

Notable Losses: Dan Henderson (Rings: King of Kings 1999); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride 25, Pride Shockwave 2004); Josh Barnett (Pride Final Conflict Absolute); Frank Mir (UFC 92)

One of a pair of twins born in the city of Vitoria da Conquista, Brazil, Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira's life is defined by the one thing he didn't share with his twin (confusingly, a professional fighter named **Antonio Rogerio Nogueira**). When he was ten years old, Nogueira was hit by a truck. He was in a coma for days, but he lived, apparently coming out of the experience with a drive and lack of fear that defines who he is as a fighter. He has a mentality, and a large scar on his back, that helps distinguish him from his twin brother — a fine fighter, but not a transcendent one like Rodrigo.

A judoka almost since birth, Nogueira took up **boxing** in his teens. More importantly, he met Ricardo De La Riva, a revolutionary student of **Carlson Gracie** who was redefining the sport of **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**. Nogueira got his black belt in April 1999. Like many BJJ schools at the time, only black belts were allowed to fight professionally. Just two months later, Nogueira would take the plunge into MMA competition, beating **UFC** veteran David Dodd at WEF 6.

In Their Own Words: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira on fighting Randy Couture in his hometown

"I had a mental picture of the fight, starting two weeks before. I knew I would go into the Octagon and the people would boo me. My heartbeat was going more and more. But my breathing made my heart rate go down. I came here and I made a good show for them. People are going to appreciate that. I come from another country to make a show for them."



Nogueira immediately showed he was a prospect to be reckoned with, both in America and in Japan for **Rings**. He was beaten in a controversial decision by **Dan Henderson** in the first Rings King of Kings tournament in 1999, but came back to win the tournament (which featured top fighters like **Fedor Emelianenko**, **Jeremy Horn**, **Randy Couture**, **Kiyoshi Tamura**, and **Renato Sobral**) the next year, winning five fights and the \$250,000 prize.

The victory put Nogueira on the map in Japan, and soon the biggest company in the world came calling. **Pride** was poaching all of the top stars in Rings, treating the smaller company like a glorified minor league feeder system. It was in Pride that fans saw a fighter with the potential to be special. He beat the best wrestler in MMA history, **Mark Coleman** with a **triangle choke/arm bar** combination to show he had what it took on the ground, then stood toe-to-toe with a banger like **Heath Herring** on the very next show to prove he could hang in there with a tough brawler.

The win over Herring made Nogueira the Pride heavyweight champion, a title he defended for almost two years. He submitted **Enson Inoue**, **Pancrase** standout Semmy Schilt, and his old nemesis Dan Henderson in that period, all great wins over top class opponents. But it was another fight that made him a legend.

Bob Sapp was a neophyte, but that inexperience came in a 360-pound package of pure muscle. Sapp would go on to become a mainstream celebrity in Japan. He would be so busy with his outside commitments that there would be little time for things like training and learning the fight game. But that would come later. This version of Bob Sapp was in the best shape he would ever be in and knew just enough to be incredibly dangerous. He overwhelmed Nogueira with pure size, slamming him like a rag doll, once even spiking him head first with a **pro wrestling** powerbomb.

Sapp may have hit like a truck, but as we know, Nogueira had been hit by a truck before. He survived Sapp the same way he survived as a child. When the moment was right, he struck, submitting Sapp with a textbook arm bar. It was an amazing moment, a real life David versus Goliath.

Eventually, Nogueira would run into a goliath he couldn't simply pop in the head with a slingshot and then arm bar. The goliath was 230 pounds, pale, and slightly doughy. His name was Fedor Emelianenko and he was the best fighter in the short history of MMA. The two men fought three times. Once, in the first contest, Nogueira could barely stand up straight, collapsing in the streets of Tokyo because of a pre-existing back issue on the way to the arena. In the second fight, Nogueira was doing well before an inadvertent head butt forced a no contest. It was the third battle that showed once and for all who was the better man.

Fedor brushed aside every Nogueira submission attempt, showing the world a new level of speed, power, and technical prowess. He won a unanimous decision and from that point forward, Nogueira, once the best heavyweight in history, had to settle for being second best.

Besides Fedor, only one other man beat Antonio during his 21-fight career in Pride: former UFC champion **Josh Barnett**. In his final fight with the promotion, Nogueira avenged that loss. He joined many of Pride's best in the **UFC** with a big win in his pocket and the UFC title on his mind. Before he could earn a title shot though, he first had to reacquaint himself with an old friend.

Nogueira and Heath Herring had one of the most action-packed heavyweight fights in MMA history. The rematch inside the UFC Octagon had a lot to live up to, but it did not disappoint. Herring hit Nogueira as hard as a man can hit another man at UFC 73. The tough champion has few memories of this epic back-and-forth; he went through much of it in a daze after a Herring kick rocked him. Somehow Nogueira survived, winning a three round decision on instinct alone.

The Herring fight showed clearly what many had suspected for some time. The once-great man's reflexes had slowed dramatically. Although he was

surviving thanks to his legendary toughness, Nogueira was taking beating after beating, and they were taking a toll on his physical well-being.

He survived another shellacking, coming from behind once again to beat the gargantuan **Tim Sylvia** for the UFC interim heavyweight title. The UFC had a problem. They could tell fans Nogueira was a great fighter until they were blue in the face. Hard-core fans were comfortable with him and other Pride mainstays in the main event. But to the bulk of American MMA fans, he and fellow Pride refugee **Quinton Jackson** were virtual unknowns.

The UFC fixed that problem with the best weapon in the promotion's considerable marketing arsenal: a coaching appearance on ***The Ultimate Fighter***. Nogueira's opposite number was **Frank Mir**, a former UFC champion coming off a huge win over **Brock Lesnar**, the closest thing to Nogueira/Sapp the sport had ever seen. The two were a study in contrasts, Nogueira coming off as a loveable guru and Mir as the cocky and brash golden boy. Unfortunately, the fight between the coaches that culminated the season at UFC 92 wasn't a coming out party for the good guy. Nogueira suffered from a bad staph infection that prevented him from training properly. He looked lethargic and was stopped standing by Mir, a fighter not known for his striking prowess.

Against fellow legend Randy Couture, however, it was a different story. This was the Nogueira of old — or at least it resembled a slightly slower version of him. He and Couture put on an epic performance in front of Randy's hometown Portland, Oregon, crowd at UFC 102. It was a fight for the ages, and one that propelled Nogueira back into title contention. Now a known commodity, the aging legend is looking for one more magical moment to cap a memorable career.

Nogueira, Antonio Rogerio

Nicknames: Minotoro, Little Nog

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 6/2/76

Debut: Deep 2nd Impact (3/18/01)

Career Record: 19-3

Notable Wins: Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (Deep 6th Impact); Guy Mezger (Pride 24); Kazuhiro Nakamura (Pride 25, Pride Bushido 4); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride Shockwave 2003); Alistair Overeem (Pride 29, Pride Critical Countdown Absolute); Dan Henderson (Pride Total Elimination 2005); Vladimir Matyushenko (Affliction: Day of Reckoning)

Notable Losses: Vladimir Matyushenko (UFO: Legend); Mauricio Rua (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou (Pride 33)

It's got to be tough to be a **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt, a Brazilian and South American Games super heavyweight **boxing** champion, and a Pan American

Games bronze medalist, and *still* be seen as the second best fighter in your own immediate family. Such is the fate of Antonio Rogerio Nogueira. When your identical twin brother is **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** — an absolute legend in the sport, the top heavyweight submission artist in the game, admired in equal measure for his technical prowess, toughness, and incredible heart — that’s just how it’s going to be.

But Rogerio — “Minotoro” rather than “Minotauro,” but more often referred to as “Little Nog” by MMA fans to avoid confusion — has spent virtually all his fighting career as a legitimate top ten fighter in his own right. Competing in **Pride**’s stacked middleweight (205 pounds) division, Nogueira amassed an impressive record of 8–2. The first of his Pride losses is easy to overlook: clearly there’s no shame in dropping a decision to **Mauricio Rua** at a time when the dangerous “Shogun” was at his absolute peak. In Pride’s 2005 middleweight Grand Prix, Rua tore through **Quinton Jackson**, Alistair Overeem, and **Ricardo Arona** in less than 15 total minutes. Rogerio lasted longer than those three top contenders combined.

It was Nogueira’s other Pride loss that raised more than a few eyebrows. When the unheralded judoka **Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou**, in only his fourth professional fight, knocked the accomplished boxer Nogueira out in only 23 seconds, it was hard to know what to make of it. When Sokoudjou went on to do much the same against Ricardo Arona, it seemed as though Nogueira had been the first victim of the division’s new star. As Sokoudjou has fallen back down the light heavyweight ladder, though, it seems Nogueira simply got caught with something of a lucky punch. Since that enormous upset, Nogueira has fought and won in a variety of promotions — **Sengoku**, **Affliction**, **Hardcore Fighting Championships**, **Jungle Fight** — before the welcome news broke in the summer of 2009 that Nogueira would be joining his brother in the **UFC** by year’s end.

North-south

A dominant ground fighting position in which the attacker, kneeling above his opponent’s head, pins his opponent chest to chest. **Judo** players know the position as *kami-shiho gatame* (upper four-quarters hold) and consider it a distinct pinning technique, whereas **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** practitioners often classify the position as a variation of **side control**. Under the widely observed **Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts**, in which knees to the head of a downed opponent are illegal, the north-south position is far less dangerous for the pinned opponent than it is under the more relaxed rule sets followed in the Japanese **Pride**, **Dream**, and **Sengoku** organizations. Nevertheless, under any rules, the

pinned fighter must work to improve his position. He can turn to his knees, incrementally work his way towards the **half-guard** and **guard** positions, or attempt a more dramatic escape, like throwing his legs up over his own head in an attempt at **rear mount**, or a sweep into either side control or a north-south pin of his own. The fighter on top has a variety of possibilities for submissions, most prominently the **Kimura**, **arm bar**, **arm triangle** choke, or the aptly named north-south choke, in which the attacker encircles his opponent's neck (sometimes trapping an arm) and constricts blood flow with his biceps.

See also **positional hierarchy**



Ogawa, Naoya

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 253 lbs

Born: 3/31/68

Debut: Red Devil Free Fight (9/27/97)

Career Record: 7-2

Notable Win: Gary Goodridge (Pride 6)

Notable Losses: Hidehiko Yoshida (Pride Shockwave 2005), Fedor Emelianenko (Pride Final Conflict 2004)

What might Naoya Ogawa have been? A four-time world **judo** champion, seven-time All-Japan judo champion, and Olympic silver medalist, Ogawa could have entered MMA as one of the world's most decorated grapplers. Instead, he entered the sport as a professional wrestler looking to add credibility to his fake fighting persona. From the world of **professional wrestling**, **Antonio Inoki**'s golden boy brought with him a showman's sense of style and flair, a loyal following of Japanese fans who had been captivated by Ogawa's era-defining bouts with Shinya Hashimoto, and, unfortunately, matches with fixed outcomes. It's difficult to say anything conclusive about thrown or worked fights, but if Ogawa's **Pride** fights against **Gary Goodridge**, Masaaki Satake, and Stefan Leko look a little strange to you, you're definitely not alone. Ogawa's legitimate MMA contest experience could well be limited to his one-minute mauling at the hands of **Fedor Emelianenko**, and a New Year's Eve loss to judo rival **Hidehiko Yoshida** that was, at the time, the richest payout in MMA history. None of this detracts from the splendor of "Hustle March," Ogawa's self-performed wrestling theme song, or the awkward hip thrusting that so often accompanies it.

Okami, Yushin

Nickname: Thunder

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 7/21/81

Debut: GCM: Demolition 1 (9/8/02)

Career Record: 24-5

Notable Wins: Anderson Silva (ROTR 8); Evan Tanner (UFC 82); Dean Lister (UFC 92)

Notable Losses: Jake Shields (ROTR 9); Rich Franklin (UFC 72); Chael Sonnen (UFC 104)

Although it resulted from a disqualification, Yushin Okami holds the distinction of being the last man to defeat **UFC** middleweight champion **Anderson Silva**. With no particularly threatening challengers to Silva's throne on the horizon, and with Silva's continued talk of an imminent retirement from mixed martial arts in order to test his skills in the sport of **boxing**, that's a distinction Okami might hold permanently. And while a DQ win — in a match where he was actually on the run almost from the moment the opening bell sounded — might not necessarily seem like much for Okami to hang his hat on, it might have to do. Because no matter what he does, who he beats, Yushin Okami can't seem to catch a break in the **UFC**.

A big middleweight with strong **wrestling** and **judo** as well as a dangerous **ground and pound** game, Okami comes to **MMA** by way of the Wajyutsu Keisyukai gym in Tokyo, best known as the home of lightweight submission stylist **Caol Uno**. After fighting his way through the ranks of Japan's second tier promotions, and making one-fight appearances in both **Pride's** Bushido series and **K-1**, Okami competed in **Rumble on the Rock's** 2006 welterweight tournament, where he earned his DQ win over Silva before dropping a decision to **Jake Shields** in a close contest.

Later that same year, Okami made his **UFC** debut, and impressively fought three times in just over four months, earning a decision win over Alan Belcher and stopping both Rory Singer and Kalib Starnes with strikes. These impressive prelim performances earned Okami a main card bout against the popular Mike Swick, and a solid decision win over the former **TUF** contestant earned him an opponent with some real name value: former middleweight champion **Rich Franklin**. After two close rounds, Okami nearly finished Franklin with a **Kimura** in the third, only to lose in a unanimous decision. Although far from a robbery, as it was not difficult to make the case that Franklin narrowly won rounds one and two, the decision was controversial, as clearly Okami came closest to ending a very even fight.

You'd think this would have cemented Okami's status as a legitimate contender in the middleweight division. At the very least, you'd think this would have positioned Okami as a main card fighter, rather than an up-and-comer relegated to the preliminaries. But in a promotion that understandably values entertainment value above all else, Okami was hampered by a reputation as a fighter content to grind out a decision rather than throw caution to the wind and push desperately for a finish.

It's this reputation, more than any hole in his game or weakness his opponents have been able to identify, that has held Okami back and kept him out of the limelight. More recently, injuries have taken their toll too: a broken hand put a rematch and title challenge against Anderson Silva on ice. When he returned from injury, Okami was once again relegated to the preliminaries. In the UFC, it's not enough to win. You've got to win the right way to make it to the top.

Olympians

They are the best athletes in the world in their respective sports, sacrificing their time, bodies, their youth to the country they love. They represent what is best about athletics, a purity that transcends the big-money business sports (and even the Olympics themselves) have become. Is there any question about why MMA would want to have some of these true blue American Olympians in their back pocket?

In the early days of no-holds-barred fighting (now called mixed martial arts or MMA) the events were often unregulated and unbelievably violent. Many of the fighters, frankly, were not great athletes. They were exactly what they appeared to be: local tough guy martial artists and bar fighters, waiting in a long line to be humbled by one of the Gracie brothers or another skilled grappler. The sport evolved quickly. Fighters saw what was working and soon the contests were filled with highly skilled, well trained athletes. But the reputation as human cockfighting, the reputation of being a sport for thugs and bar room fatsos was harder to shed. You could argue about whether **Royce Gracie** was an athlete or a street fighter. But no one could argue with an Olympic medal.

While there were many superlative athletes involved in MMA from the beginning, the first bona fide Olympian to make his mark in the Octagon was heavyweight Mark Schultz. Schultz was interested in MMA, working out with **Rickson Gracie** and giving the jiu-jitsu ace plenty of trouble before eventually tapping out to a **triangle choke**. Schultz didn't come to **UFC 9** in Detroit intending to fight; he was cornering Canadian **Dave Beneteau**. When Beneteau had to withdraw, UFC matchmaker **Art Davie** spent hours convincing Schultz to fight. He was in good shape for a bout, but hadn't really prepared, physically or mentally, for a fight. He was inclined to say no, but the promotion, desperate not to lose a fight in the midst of a distracting legal battle, gave him 50,000 reasons to say yes.

Schultz — in borrowed gear — outwrestled **Gary Goodridge** in his first and only MMA fight, bloodying the big man's face and forcing "Big" **John McCarthy**

to stop the fight. Schultz might have been the best UFC heavyweight of all time, but we'll never know. Schultz was the head **wrestling** coach at Brigham Young University, a conservative school in Utah, and the UFC, regularly lambasted in the media, was quickly becoming a hot button issue in Republican circles thanks to the efforts of Arizona Senator John McCain. He was told he could fight or he could coach, but he couldn't do both. He kept his day job, leaving MMA with a great "what if."

Two other Olympic gold medalists, Kenny Monday and Kevin Jackson, also gave MMA a try, in **John Perretti's Extreme Fighting**. But the wrestler that really left his mark on the sport never appeared on the medal stand. **Mark Coleman** had finished seventh as a freestyle wrestler in the 1992 Olympics and immediately established himself as a transcendent force in MMA, developing a brutal **ground and pound** style that was hard to stop.

While Coleman was a freestyle wrestler, focused on explosive double leg takedowns at the expense of almost everything else, two other Olympians who specialized in Greco-Roman wrestling took a different approach. **Dan Henderson** (10th place 1992, 12th place 1996), **Matt Lindland** (2000 silver medalist), and teammate **Randy Couture** (himself an Olympic alternate) all made ends meet in MMA while continuing to pursue their Olympic dreams.

The three formed **Team Quest** in Portland, Oregon, and developed a new approach for wrestlers in MMA. The Greco style, one that doesn't allow holds below the waist, ended up being particularly well suited to MMA. The wrestler could control his opponent against the cage, scoring points with short punches, or taking the action to the mat on a whim. Henderson was arguably the most successful Olympian (or wrestler) of all, winning two world titles in **Pride**, ironically on the strength of his right hand more than any wrestling techniques.

Other Olympic gold medalists have moonlighted in the fight game, including boxer **Ray Mercer**, wrestler Rulon Garner, and the **judo** triumvirate of **Pawel Nastula**, **Hidehiko Yoshida**, and Makoto Takimoto. While Yoshida became a star in **Pride**, the other judokas saw limited success. In Henderson and Coleman's day, pure grapplers could excel based on their one extraordinary skill. By the time the judoka entered the sport, fighters needed to be ready to battle in all areas at a very high level — at least they did against top competition.

The most interesting one-time wonder was Egyptian Karam Ibrahim Gaber. Gaber had dominated the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. Even against the best in the world he proved to be on an entirely different plane, winning the semi-finals 11-0 and taking the gold medal by a score of 12-1. Perhaps such success demanded a dose of humility.

Karam, who wrestled at 211 pounds, was booked in a match with 240-pound Pride stand-out **Kazayuki Fujita** for New Year's Eve 2004. Gaber was confident in the limited **boxing** he had worked on in the gym, and like many wrestlers before him and many to follow, forgot what brought him to the dance. He stood and traded with Fujita, more than holding his own, but only for a minute. At 1:07 of the first round, Fujita shellacked him with a punch that almost resembled a **pro wrestling** clothesline. It was another lesson that fighters needed to learn: once the cage door shuts, MMA recognizes no pedigree, only performance.

Omoplata

An arm lock, often though not exclusively executed from **guard**, in which the attacker traps the opponent's arm between his legs and attacks the elbow, shoulder, or both in a manner similar to the **Kimura** or ude garami. As the Japanese term for this technique sankaku garami ("triangular entanglement") implies, the attacker's legs are often locked into a triangular configuration to secure the hold. A vastly more common attack in **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** than **judo**, the technique is almost universally known by its Portuguese name, literally "shoulder blade."

Although a staple of **gi**-grappling, the omoplata ends few matches in the slipperier no-gi context of mixed martial arts. Hidetaka Monma, Alberto Crane, Gil Castillo, and **Mac Danzig** are among the handful of fighters who have managed to finish fights with the technique. The omoplata has proven effective, however, as a transitional move setting up the **arm bar**, **triangle choke**, and a variety of sweeps.

Dustin Hazelett's spectacular submission win over Tamdan McCrory at **UFC 91** is a prime example. From guard, Hazelett triangled his legs around McCrory's right arm, contorting it such that McCrory was forced to somersault to relieve the pressure. A single-minded Hazelett secured the hold once again, straightened McCrory's arm, and applied a twisting, inverted arm bar that was either a sickening sight or a thing of beauty, depending on your disposition. While a win by omoplata remains a rare sight, and is unknown at the sport's highest level, there are countless ways the technique can lead to victory, however indirectly.

Ortiz, Tito

Nickname: The Huntington Beach Bad Boy

Weight: 205 lbs

Debut: UFC 13 (5/30/97)

Height: 6'2"

Born: 1/23/75

Career Record: 15-7-1

Notable Wins: Jerry Bohlander (UFC 18); Guy Mezger (UFC 19); Wanderlei Silva (UFC 25); Yuki Kondo (UFC 29); Ken Shamrock (UFC 40, UFC 61, UFC: The Final Chapter); Vitor Belfort (UFC 51); Forrest Griffin (UFC 59)

Notable Losses: Guy Mezger (UFC 13); Frank Shamrock (UFC 22); Randy Couture (UFC 44); Chuck Liddell (UFC 47, UFC 66); Lyoto Machida (UFC 84); Forrest Griffin (UFC 106)

It was a simple T-shirt, plain black cotton, adorned with none of the flourishes and elaborate script that have come to define MMA couture. Tito Ortiz slipped it on after beating the **Lion's Den's Jerry Bohlander** at **UFC 18**. The predecessor of the "Condom Depot" ad on the fighter's trunks, it read simply, "I Just F**cked Your Ass." It was crude, socially unacceptable, and pure bad boy. Tito Ortiz, who had been one of many hard-nosed wrestlers looking to make it in the UFC, was suddenly a cartoon character. The Huntington Beach Bad Boy was born.

Much has been lost in the wake of Tito Ortiz's epic feud with UFC President **Dana White**. "You know I hate Tito," White once said. "Why are you asking about him?" That answer is easy. Tito Ortiz, whether you white-wash him out of the official UFC history or not, is the most dominating and important champion of the UFC's dark ages and early rise to prominence. He won the light heavyweight title in a match with **Wanderlei Silva** and never looked back. He defended the belt five times, something **Randy Couture**, **Chuck Liddell**, and even **Frank Shamrock** can't match. Along the way, Ortiz became the UFC's signature villain, understanding that colorful and cocky characters sell fights. Ortiz, much to White's chagrin, always understood that in the end, fighting was a business.

It all started with **Tank Abbott**. The UFC's original bad boy needed a wrestler to train with and Ortiz was a willing victim. Like so many wrestlers, Ortiz had a real affinity for the sport, picking things up quickly and enjoying it more than a little. But Ortiz wasn't a professional yet. He was still dreaming of wrestling success, enrolling at Cal State Bakersfield, and looking to follow in the footsteps of NCAA champion Stephen Neal. It wasn't meant to be. An argument with a hard-nosed coach sent Ortiz scurrying. It was the best thing that could have possibly happened to the struggling UFC promotion.

Ortiz's feud with **Ken Shamrock's** Lion's Den lit a fire beneath an entire sport. After the T-shirt gimmick at **UFC 18**, Ortiz took it up a notch at the next show against Bohlander's teammate **Guy Mezger**. Mezger had beaten Ortiz at **UFC 13**, when Tito had very little MMA training, and Ortiz felt he was disrespecting him in the pre-fight buildup. The T-shirt he put on after dismantling Mezger was



more to the point: “Gay Mezger Is My Bitch.” Shamrock was furious, leaning over the top of the cage, pointing and screaming. “Tito,” the legendary fighter said. “Don’t let me catch you wearing that T-shirt.”

It was the start of something special. Unfortunately, Shamrock was under contract with the WWE. The fight between Ken and Ortiz would have to wait more than two and a half years. Luckily, the UFC had an ace up their sleeves,

Ken's adopted brother Frank. Frank Shamrock had established himself as the best fighter in the world. He and Ken were estranged, not even on speaking terms, but a good story is a good story.

In the storyline, Frank was looking to avenge Ortiz's victories over the Lion's Den, and that's just what he did. It was the performance of a lifetime, a display of physical endurance unparalleled in MMA history. Shamrock simply outlasted Ortiz, as strong in the fourth round as he was in the first. Ortiz learned important lessons that night in 1999. He was the better fighter, he was confident of that. But he wasn't the best prepared, and it cost him; he vowed not to let it happen again.

Ortiz perfected his art and his theatrics over the next three years. He won the title in a fight with Wanderlei Silva, giving the UFC bragging rights when Silva went on to become the top fighter in Japan's **Pride** promotion. Once he had the title, Ortiz worked hard to keep it. He beat all comers, becoming the UFC's best fighter and best draw at the gate. After his wins, Ortiz would pretend to dig a grave, symbolically burying the opponent he had just defeated.

At UFC 40, he finally got his shot at Ken Shamrock. Shamrock was game, but out of his league. It was the biggest pay-per-view since **Zuffa** had gotten the UFC back on cable networks, finally proving to fans that the new generation of fighters like Ortiz were a notch ahead of the old guard. It was his fifth consecutive defense, and afterward Ortiz was as cocky as ever. The UFC had their villain. Now they needed a hero, and they found one in Randy Couture.

While Ortiz held out for more money, going back and forth in the media with his former manager White, Couture beat Chuck Liddell to win the interim title. Fans and critics had suggested Ortiz was afraid of Liddell, rumors he lent credence to by immediately returning to fight Couture. Ortiz was confident that the older Couture, a fighter who had lost twice in a row in the heavyweight division, wouldn't be much of a challenge. Instead, Couture proved he was as good as ever, just a little undersized against the mammoth heavyweights. He took Ortiz, who had always won the **wrestling** phase of any fight, down to the mat with ease. To punctuate the storyline, Couture spanked the bad boy as the fifth round came to an end. With tears in his eyes, Ortiz put his UFC title around Couture's waist. He would never taste gold again.

Next for Tito was the long awaited showdown with Liddell. The two had trained together briefly when White managed both men. Ortiz used their friendship as a reason not to give Liddell a well earned title shot. Liddell thought Ortiz was ducking him. The resulting war of words captivated UFC fans, who for the most part sided with the likeable Liddell. When he knocked Ortiz out in the second round at UFC 47, Liddell became a bona fide star.

After consecutive losses, Ortiz desperately needed to get his career back on track. He was able to do that, beating **Patrick Côté** and **Vitor Belfort**. But by this point Ortiz's most compelling feud was with White and UFC management. Anything happening in the cage seemed secondary to this bigger battle. After the Belfort fight, Ortiz left the promotion, teasing a move to Pride or a jump to **pro wrestling**. Because of his problems with White, a return to the UFC appeared unlikely.

As they say, appearances can be deceiving. Ortiz made a dramatic UFC return more than a year later to coach against his hated rival Ken Shamrock in the third season of ***The Ultimate Fighter***. It was the best season of the show, both in terms of drama and in the ratings. Ortiz, the ultimate bad boy, became the crowd favorite, showing an effortless ability to coach and motivate his fighters. Shamrock, by contrast, seemed angry and out of touch. It was a shocking role reversal.

After the show, the two men stepped into the Octagon; 12 weeks of compelling television drama had built up a heated grudge match. UFC 61 set pay-per-view records for the company thanks to the two men, inexplicably put second from the top behind a **Tim Sylvia/Andrei Arlovski** fight for the heavyweight crown. In front of a pro-Ortiz crowd, Tito pounded Shamrock out in less than two minutes. The end was nigh when referee **Herb Dean** jumped in to stop the fight, a tad early for the final fight in that monumental feud.

The crowd was livid, Shamrock was livid, and Dana White had a hard choice. Instead of a profitable fight on pay-per-view, White booked a rematch that he showed free on Spike TV to make things right for the fans who felt cheated by the unsatisfactory ending. The third fight was almost a carbon copy of the second. Shamrock could no longer back up his tough talk. He could promote a fight as well as anyone; he just couldn't hold up his end anymore.

Two high profile wins put Ortiz in line for a title shot against his old nemesis Liddell. Since they last met, "The Iceman" had taken over for Ortiz as the face of the company. The bad blood had only gotten worse over the years and Tito convinced many that this time he had a real shot. It was a tough matchup for Ortiz, no matter how much trash he talked. Liddell was a good enough wrestler to stay on his feet. And while he had made a great deal of progress with his **Muay Thai** boxing, Ortiz just wasn't able to compete with the heavy-handed champion. He couldn't win, but he did a good job of convincing fans he might. UFC 66 set a record for pay-per-view buys that stood for almost three years.

Ortiz was still a huge star, but physically he was falling apart. A bad back hobbled him, to the point that he could barely walk at times, let alone train.

His fought two future champions, battling **Rashad Evans** to a draw and falling victim to **Lyoto Machida** in the final fight of his contract. He pushed those both to the brink, but seemed more interested in a proposed **boxing** match with White that never happened. Every confrontation with White seemed to distract him from the real mission at hand: returning to the top of the sport.

In the year and a half he was out of the promotion, Ortiz was busy. Just before the Machida fight, he starred in Donald Trump's *Celebrity Apprentice*. In 2009 Ortiz and porn star girlfriend Jenna Jameson had twin boys. More importantly for his fighting career, Ortiz had surgery to repair his damaged back. Ortiz was ready to make a serious comeback. He teased going to **Strikeforce**, **Affliction**, and **EliteXC**. When the news dropped that he had made a decision, it came from his old nemesis White and it came on Twitter: "welcome back tito :)"

Osborne, Jeff

In his 15 years in the sport, former pro wrestler Jeff Osborne has literally done it all. He's been a fighter, an event promoter in his home state of Indiana with HOOKnSHOOT, an announcer for the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, the commissioner of BodogFight, and one of the biggest proponents of women's fighting on the planet.

Osborne has never been flashy. As an announcer, he was best known for his robotic mannerisms, monotone voice, and encyclopedic knowledge of the sport. The events he promotes reflect these same values. Osborne never attempted to promote a major pay-per-view, never tried to bring in major name fighters he couldn't afford, and always seemed to make money.

In the early days of MMA, Osborne's HOOKnSHOOT often featured fighters who were UFC-bound. **Yves Edwards**, Aaron Riley, Steve Berger, and Chris Lytle all made their mark with Osborne before becoming UFC mainstays. Today, that's no longer the case. Osborne tends to sell local fighters to a local audience. But he did remain a step ahead of others in the sport by being the first promoter to fully embrace women's MMA.

Osborne promoted his first women's fight all the way back in March of 2001, between Judy Neff and Jessica Ross, years before anyone outside of her family had high hopes for one **Gina Carano**. In 2002, Osborne took it to another level, promoting North America's first all women's card.

HOOKnSHOOT Revolution, held in April 2002, was a huge challenge for Osborne. He matched up 14 women in seven fights out of an entire field of about 30 legitimate female fighters. Many of the fights were blowouts, but the women proved to doubters that they could entertain just as well as

the men. Osborne found a diamond in the rough Tara LaRosa on this card, and Angela Restad and Mayra Conde put on a fight that would make any male fighter proud.

The event was a success at the box office and later on DVD, and women became a staple of Osborne's Indiana-based promotion. He remains a huge supporter of women in the sport and runs the popular GFIGHT.TV Web site.

Overeem, Alistair

Nickname: Demolition Man

Height: 6'5"

Weight: 255 lbs

Born: 5/17/80

Debut: 10/24/99

Career Record: 33-11 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Vitor Belfort (Pride Total Elimination 2005, Strikeforce: Revenge); Igor Vovchancyn (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Mark Hunt (Dream 5); Kazayuki Fujita (Dynamite!! 2009); Brett Rogers (Strikeforce: Heavy Artillery)

Notable Losses: Chuck Liddell (Pride Total Elimination 2003); Antonio Rogerio Nogueira (Pride 29, Pride Critical Countdown Absolute); Mauricio Rua (Pride Final Conflict 2005, Pride 33); Fabricio Werdum (Pride: Total Elimination Absolute); Ricardo Arona (Pride Final Conflict Absolute); Sergei Kharitonov (Hero's Tournament Final)

For most of his up and down career, Alistair Overeem was a perfectly serviceable fighter. He had the solid kickboxing you'd expect from a Dutchman and a surprisingly effective **guillotine choke** that was his go-to submission hold. Against lesser lights, he shined. But when up against the best in the light heavyweight division, it was no contest (and not the kind of no contest he earned by smashing **Mirko Cro Cop** in the groin over and over again). Against **Chuck Liddell**, **Ricardo Arona**, and **Mauricio Rua**, Overeem showed that he was somewhere just below a top tier fighter.

Then he grew. And grew. Then he grew some more. By the time he was done, the new Overeem looked like the Hulk, the old Overeem the scrawny and weak Bruce Banner by comparison. Almost overnight he was sporting 50 pounds of solid muscle and was suddenly the hottest prospect in the heavyweight division. The new Overeem, called **Ubereem** by his fans, went on a rampage through the weakened Japanese scene that was unprecedented in MMA history. He looked like the muscle-bound cult favorite **Bob Sapp**, but a Bob Sapp who could fight. Like Sapp, Overeem was a multisport hit in Japan; along with his MMA wins, he had a solid showing in K-1, including a knock-out win over Badr Hari and a close decision loss to Remy Bojansky.

This success in Japan was great for Overeem's career. It was less great for San Jose, California, based **Strikeforce**. In 2007, Overeem quietly won the

Strikeforce heavyweight title from **Paul Buentello**. It would be his last fight on American soil for almost three years. As Overeem grew in stature in Japan, Strikeforce went through its own transformation from regional promotion to national powerhouse. Eventually Strikeforce President Scott Coker made an offer Overeem couldn't refuse and he was back in the fold, demolishing prospect **Brett Rogers** in a scary display of power and skill.

Coker was building to Strikeforce's first pay-per-view spectacular. The plan was for Overeem to clash with the immortal **Fedor Emelianenko** in the main event. But it's always dangerous to make long-term plans in MMA. **Fabricio Werdum**, who had beaten Overeem in **Pride** as well, threw a wrench in the works by upsetting Emelianenko in less than two minutes. If Overeem was going to lock horns with the Russian legend, it wouldn't have quite the shine it did months before. Fedor or no Fedor, after his impressive national television debut against Rogers, the world awaits Overeem's next move with baited breath.



Pancrase

Many people assume that modern MMA started with **UFC 1** at the McNichols Arena in Denver, Colorado, in November 1993. In fact, the first mixed fights had taken place months earlier at the Tokyo NK Hall in Japan, where a small troupe of maverick pro wrestlers had taken the wrestling business back to its roots.

Masakatsu Funaki and **Minoru Suzuki** had tons of potential in traditional **professional wrestling**. Funaki had a real shot at succeeding **Antonio Inoki** as the biggest star on the Japanese circuit, and Suzuki had an amateur pedigree that could take him far. But the students of Yoshiaki Fujiwara and Karl Gotch weren't looking to take pratfalls for giant American steroid machines like the Road Warriors. They wanted to take wrestling back to a simpler time, when the matches were real and the showmanship was in the context of actual competition.

The idea wasn't exactly new. Inoki had wrestled a variety of martial artists in matches billed as the real deal back in the 1970s. In the 1980s the UWF and its offspring presented the public with "shoot-style" wrestling, predetermined matches using real techniques and real holds and designed to be realistic enough to pass for an actual fight.

It was Funaki and Suzuki who wanted to take it a step further. They wanted a match, contested under modified pro wrestling rules (break when you get into the ropes, no punches to the face), that was a legitimate shoot. The concept was unheard of, failure the predicted result. With straight matches up and down the card, the first event featured just 13 minutes and five seconds of action spread over six fights. Something would have to change.

The skill of the Japanese fighters and the exceptional American **Ken Shamrock** far exceeded their game but untrained opponents. They had learned an important lesson, deciding from then on to make sure the crowd got a show before they disposed of their hapless foes.

"You didn't want to go out there and just destroy them," Shamrock said. "You want to go out there and maybe give some encouragement to try harder next time."

Funaki realized quickly that the key to the promotion's survival was the creation of new stars. As a pro wrestler, he understood that it took a star to make a star. With that philosophy in mind, Funaki and other stalwarts like Shamrock and Suzuki would sometimes intentionally lose matches to lesser opponents in an attempt to make them big-time players.

Soon a new generation of fighters was catching up with the original trio of greats. **Bas Rutten**, a Dutch kickboxer who lost two early matches to Shamrock, was able to master the mat game and become the best fighter in the promotion, going on a 19-fight win streak, unheard of in Pancrase history.

"It was the loss to Ken. I really had it," Rutten said. "I'm a very sore loser and I knew what the problem was. It was because I didn't train any ground. That decided it for me. . . . So I start concentrating on grappling twice a day, seven days a week. I really took it to the next level."

Rutten's match with Funaki in September 1996 was the promotion's high point and its last grasp at relevance in a rapidly changing fight game. Rutten dismantled the legend standing, bloodying the man who had taken the time to teach him the submission game, in order to create the opponents for himself that he couldn't otherwise acquire.

The Pancrase game was maybe a little too refined, lacking the violence fans saw from the UFC and the newly created **Pride** organization in Japan. Funaki attempted to adjust course, going to more traditional **Vale Tudo** rules in 1998, including the legalization of punches to the head. But it was too lit-

In Their Own Words: Ken Shamrock on Pancrase rules

"Pancrase was, in the standup, open hand palm strikes. You could kick, but you wore shin guards and knee pads. You could knee when you were standing too and punch to the body. On the ground, pretty much everybody went for submissions. There wasn't a lot of striking. It was definitely a lot more technical with submissions when you were on the ground. And the standup had more of a combination of punching and kicking than early UFC. In the UFC it was closed fist, bare-knuckle. And no rules. It was a huge difference from Pancrase, where you could grab a rope and escape and start over again standing up. But you lost points when you did that. You lose five points and the fight's over. That's a whole lot of chances to escape out of a submission hold. It was a lot more strategic and you had to be a lot more skilled in your submission game. The UFC was less skilled, but a lot more dangerous than Pancrase."

tle, too late. Most of the top foreign talent had left for greener pastures in the UFC and Pride. To make matter worse, the established Japanese stars were wearing down. Years of grueling training sessions and a fight every single month had taken their toll on the Pancrase founders.

Today, the promotion continues to put on a monthly show. But it isn't an important player, even on a diminished Japanese scene. It is now firmly an independent promotion, and only the most die-hard of fans can remember a time when the best fighters in the world wore the famous Pancrase banana hammock trunks and shin guard combination.

Parisyan, Karo

Nickname: The Heat

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 8/28/82

Debut: Kage Kombat 12 (2/1/99)

Career Record: 19-5-1

Notable Wins: Nick Diaz (UFC 49); Matt Serra (UFC 53)

Notable Losses: Georges St. Pierre (UFC 46); Diego Sanchez (UFC Fight Night 6)

Over the course of his **UFC** tenure, Karo Parisyan has proven to be both one of the sport's most exciting fighters and one of its most frustrating. A junior national **judo** champion trained under Gokor Chivichyan and "Judo" **Gene LeBell**, Parisyan was the first American fighter to consistently employ the throwing techniques of judo (usually dependent on the **gi**) in the no-gi context of **The Unified Rules of MMA**. Parisyan's highlight reel includes spectacular examples of harai goshi, seoi otoshi, and sumi gaeshi, but it also includes an infamous and bizarre appearance on season five of **The Ultimate Fighter** in which a cocky Parisyan confronts an unsuspecting **Nate Diaz**, asking, "Do you even know me? Do you know who I am?" Parisyan earned a title shot against **Matt Hughes** with a hard-fought decision win over **Matt Serra**, but a hamstring injury



kept him from entering the Octagon against the welterweight champ. Decision victories over mid-level opposition have followed, but Parisyan's career has never truly gotten back on track after his loss to **Diego Sanchez** in a fight-of-the-year contender in 2006. Held back by diagnosed anxiety issues, indifferent training, and, most recently, banned prescription painkiller use, this fading welterweight contender has proven to be his own worst enemy.

Penn, B.J.

Nickname: The Prodigy

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155-170 lbs

Born: 12/13/78

Debut: UFC (5/4/01)

Career Record: 15-6-1

Notable Wins: Caol Uno (UFC 34); Takanori Gomi (ROTR 4); Matt Hughes (UFC 46); Renzo Gracie (K-1 World Grand Prix Hawaii); Sean Sherk (UFC 84); Diego Sanchez (UFC 107)

Notable Losses: Jens Pulver (UFC 35); Lyoto Machida (Hero's 1); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 58, UFC 94); Matt Hughes (UFC 63); Frankie Edgar (UFC 112)

Prodigies are very rare, but very real. In music there was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, composing by the age of five and entertaining royalty with his intricate work. The Brontë sisters took it upon themselves to write a novel each and the results changed English literature forever. Mike Tyson won the heavy-



weight boxing title at just 19 years of age. And B.J. Penn conquered the Mundials, **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu's** Super Bowl, after training in the sport for just three years.

It wasn't just that Penn almost immediately became one of the best mixed martial artists on the planet. It wasn't just that he was winning; it was the way he was winning. Penn did things no one had seen before. He blitzed the super-tough **Caol Uno** and knocked him out in less than ten seconds. Then — and this is what made the moment — instead of waiting around for the interminably long series of announcements, Penn climbed out of the cage and sprinted to the back. The message was simple and endeared Penn to the fans: he had done what he came to do. All the rest of the pomp was nonsense. He was there to fight and that part of the evening was over. He was ready to go home.

Penn had a knack for the dramatic. After failing to win the **UFC** lightweight title, losing in a shocker to **Jens Pulver** and fighting Uno to a draw in a rematch, Penn didn't wait around for another shot. Instead he moved up a weight class and dismantled the best fighter on the planet, welterweight champion **Matt Hughes**.

The Hughes fight was Penn's last in the **UFC** for almost two years. This was before **The Ultimate Fighter** and the **UFC** simply wasn't the biggest game in town. Penn was happy to continue fighting in the Octagon; he just wanted to be able to cash in on paydays in Japan too. The **UFC** held firm, stripped Penn of the title, and watched the best fighter in the world take on middleweights and even heavyweights, like future **UFC** light heavyweight champion **Lyoto Machida**, for K-1 in Japan.

The Penn that made his return to the **UFC** was not the young and energetic star who left the promotion in 2004. He insisted on fighting at 170 pounds and looked a little chunky at that weight, like a Hawaiian Buddha. Never one to shy away from controversy, Penn came to the cage carrying the welterweight title belt he had won from Hughes and never lost in competition. His bravado was tremendous, but it was his lack of commitment to training, not his lack of chutzpah, that cost him big. In a fight for the number one contender's slot against the young Canadian star **Georges St. Pierre**, Penn looked amazing through one round. He busted St. Pierre up with a pinpoint left jab, clearly taking the round. Then the wheels came off. An exhausted Penn couldn't keep up with the hungrier fighter and dropped a split decision. The difference, perhaps, was a huge slam from St. Pierre that was the most memorable moment of the third round.

One judge, Penn, and many fans thought he had won the fight. And perhaps he did — otherwise why would karma work in his favor? St. Pierre was

In Their Own Words: B.J. Penn on controversy surrounding his fights

"It's kind of a catch-22. You know, you try to build up the fights and pump up the fights, but you never know how you're going to be portrayed. But you know for me, where my head is right now, it's just all about fighting.

"The Sean Sherk one, I just really didn't like the fact that Sean Sherk was cheating. So, you know, I was just kind of irritated about that. The whole GSP thing got started with hyping up the fight and then prime time where they wanted to portray me as an asshole instead of some guy, you know, passionate about winning his dream fight. Then Dana starts speaking, the stuff he doesn't even know about, saying I am surrounded by yes men. And then back and forth, and that just blew out of proportion. I'm just trying to go out and defend my title and walk out of the cage the 155-pound champion, and that's the only thing that's on my mind right now."

injured and unable to cash in on the title shot he had earned against Penn. B.J. was happy to step up and take on Hughes again. It was a fight fans had looked forward to for years and the arena was crazy for both men. Hughes was coming off his win over **Royce Gracie** and had never been a bigger star. Penn knew how to drive the audience into a frenzy. The atmosphere was electric. "I can't believe this is my job," exclaimed UFC color man **Joe Rogan**. Again, Penn dominated the early going, nearly finishing Hughes with a **triangle choke** to end the second round. Then, the engine died. Penn was exhausted and Hughes was able to take him down and pound him out. It seemed evident that the better fighter hadn't won the bout, merely the better conditioned one.

The consecutive losses sent Penn back where he belonged: the lightweight division. He reestablished himself as the best fighter in the world at 155 pounds, winning the UFC title against **Joe Stevenson** and defending that belt against former champion **Sean Sherk** at UFC 84. B.J. also continued his knack for controversy, calling out Sherk for his steroid use and licking his opponent's blood from his hands in both bouts. After a disastrous superfight with St. Pierre at UFC 94, Penn was back defending his title.

Many thought Penn would reign well into the new decade. He was training hard for the first time in years and seemed committed to establishing his legacy as one of the sport's all-time greats. A devoted, well conditioned, and focused Penn was a scary sight — to everyone but unheralded challenger **Frankie Edgar**.

At UFC 112, the promotion's debut in the Middle East, Edgar outworked and outhustled Penn on his way to a five-round decision. The king was unceremoniously tossed from his throne, but the legend of B.J. Penn lived on. When the two meet again, the challenger will be favored instead of the champion. It's never smart to bet against B.J. Penn.

Pentagon Combat

Renzo Gracie wanted the fight, wanted it really badly. As the sport of MMA continued to grow worldwide, the long feud between **Luta Livre** and **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** was beginning to fade away. But **Eugenio Tadeu** was different. Ever since he fought Renzo's cousin **Royler Gracie** all the way back in 1984, he had been a thorn in the Gracies' side.

Even though his big money Japanese debut at **Pride 1** against **Akira Shoji** was just two weeks away on October 11, 1997, Gracie was willing to risk injury and defeat for this fight. It wasn't just a chance to create an emphatic ending for the decades-long feud between the two styles; it was also an opportunity to bring big-time **Vale Tudo** back to its spiritual home in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Sheik Tahnoon Bin Zayed Al Nahyan was more than just one of thousands of neophyte jiu-jitsu students in California, interested in the art after the success of **Royce Gracie** in the **UFC**. He was also the son of the Sheik Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the former leader of the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East. His late father's wealth was estimated to top \$24 billion. The family lived a life of leisure and Sheik Tahnoon wanted to continue studying jiu-jitsu. Instead of staying near his teacher to continue his instruction, Sheik Tahnoon simply brought jiu-jitsu instructor Nelson Monteiro with him back to the United Arab Emirates.

Monteiro had an amazing opportunity. For years Vale Tudo had been all but illegal in Rio de Janeiro and constant fights in the street between martial artists left the sport with a bad reputation among locals and politicians. The fight game had slowly been creeping back into Brazil, with the **International Vale Tudo Championship (IVC)** and **World Vale Tudo Championship (WVC)** both running shows in the country. These shows featured top fighters but were poorly produced and distinctly minor league. American fighter **Mark Kerr** was shocked when he was snuck into the basement of a hotel for his WVC fight.

Monteiro was proposing something altogether different for an event called Pentagon Combat. With Tahnoon's enormous fortune and, as a huge fan of the sport, his complete support, Monteiro wanted a world-class event for

Brazil. He brought in a nice cage rather than a dilapidated old boxing ring, planning on making this an enjoyable evening for fight fans and young couples out on the town.

Monteiro and event organizers made one fatal mistake: they skimped on security. Hundreds of fighters and street kids invaded the Tijuca Gymnasium hours early, staking a claim on cageside seats and refusing to budge (or to pay admission). What could have been the potential tipping point for MMA in Brazil was instead its death knell.

It was a startlingly hot day in Brazil, and as the temperatures rose, so did the tempers. **Oleg Taktarov** beat Sean Alvarez and **Murilo Bustamante** beat UFC 12 champion **Jerry Bohlander** in the other top fights. But in Brazil, the only fight that mattered was coming on last. By the time the main event began, the arena was a powder keg, ready to explode at any moment. Tadeu and Gracie had a spirited back-and-forth battle. Gracie claimed after the fight that Tadeu had oiled himself up before the fight and then rubbed himself dry. When the sweat began to pour, however, he became too slippery to control. The only way to control him was to push him up against the fence.

While the two men did battle, a more interesting contest was taking place cage side. The two camps, Luta Livre and jiu-jitsu, were fighting over coaching territory, arguing, screaming, and shoving. Ten minutes into the fight, the entire cage was packed with people, screaming and hanging on for dear life.

The fighters too were just looking to survive. Both men were exhausted, with Tadeu throwing lackluster leg kicks and Renzo too tired to do anything but watch them connect. As he toppled to the ground next to the cage and refused to stand, daring the Luta Livre ace to join him on the mat, Renzo sent the crowd into a fever pitch. They were screaming, shaking the cage, even kicking him through the mesh.

Then the lights went out, a man was tossed from the cage, and a full scale riot began. Chairs were flying, gun shots were heard from a distance, and a potential classic ended with no winner. No contests are fairly common. No contests because of a riot? Only in Brazil.

What could have been a major MMA promotion in Brazil was finished before it started. The riots confirmed the poor reputation of the MMA community in the country. Sheik Tahnoun wanted no more to do with MMA. He turned his energies and money in another direction. The death of Pentagon Combat led to the creation of the Abu Dhabi Combat Club and the world's top grappling contest. From death comes life: MMA in Brazil, busy confirming the basic principles of the universe.

Perretti, John

Before there was an **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, John Perretti says he had a vision in his mind of a battle between the martial arts to see who the best fighter in the world was — and to see which styles were real, and which were more show than go. If only Woodstock 2 hadn't been such a huge disaster, **Extreme Fighting** might still be around, thriving, the top promotion in the world instead of forgotten to history. John Perretti might have been the acerbic and foul-mouthed president, in place of **Dana White**.

"We were booked for Madison Square Garden before the first Ultimate," Perretti said. "They didn't even exist. We were backed by Polygram Records. We were ready to go on. I had all my fighters lined up."

But when Woodstock went up in smoke, the executive who had cut a deal to bring Extreme Fighting to the air lost his job. "They lost \$28 million in one day," Perretti said. "They put us on hold. We had to go out and refinance the whole show." By the time Perretti and his partner Donald Zuckerman put all the pieces back together, they had missed their window. Extreme Fighting, fairly or not, would be seen as a UFC copycat.

Despite following in the UFC's very large footsteps, Extreme Fighting was able to carve out an audience by bringing together a collection of world-class athletes. Perretti traveled around the world looking for fighters. Unlike the UFC's **Art Davies**, who often looked at a resume or an old training tape, Perretti wanted to see what each man could do personally. "I wrestled with everybody, he said. "I did standup with everybody. I was their proving ground."

To critics, and there are many, this is typical Perretti hyperbole. There is a famous story in MMA circles about Perretti's claims to personally test the sport's athletes. After Extreme Fighting went under, Perretti was scooped up to be the UFC's new matchmaker. He was bragging to others in **SEG** about rolling on the mat with wrestling stalwart **Randy Couture**, impressed with how well Couture handled himself. When asked about the encounter, Couture was confused. "I've never even met John Perretti," the future UFC legend revealed.

Besides being a matchmaker and a martial artist, Perretti was also the color commentator for Extreme Fighting and his own grappling competition, The Contenders. Good-looking and smart, Perretti had trouble hiding his disdain for fighters, other announcers, and even legendary wrestler Dan Gable. He spent much of his time on the air, especially when he had guest shots on UFC broadcasts, critiquing fighter's body types and disparaging their techniques. The greatest Perretti announcing moment was his complete dismissal of former UFC champion **Dan Severn**. Asked by announcer **Mike Goldberg** what Severn had left to offer, Perretti replied, "Did he ever have anything to offer?" The

problem with this honest assessment? Severn was about to come out for a main event fans had paid good money to see.

Perretti was never afraid to say what he was thinking. The world seemed to be split into two factions, those in his camp and his bitter enemies. Opinions of his UFC matchmaking exemplify this divide. Some, including Perretti, say he was revolutionizing the promotion. Others suggest that he sent out a booking sheet to two agents. One would go to super-agent **Monte Cox**. Once Cox filled in his fighters, the sheet would be sent to agent Phyllis Lee to fill in their opponents.

When **Zuffa** bought the company in 2001, Perretti lost a struggle with long-time UFC consultant **Joe Silva**. Silva was a veteran martial artist like Perretti, and had the advantage of following the sport and its fighters as closely as anyone on the planet. Silva became the UFC matchmaker; Perretti cut the sport out of his life entirely. He continued his work as a Hollywood stuntman and coordinator, only occasionally appearing on Eddie Goldman's *No Holds Barred* podcast. He made his return to the broadcast booth in 2008 for **Yammy Pit Fighting**. The show was like an SEG reunion, bringing together former UFC owner **Bob Meyrowitz**, announcers Bruce Beck and **Jeff Blatnick**, and Perretti. The show was an epic disaster. With no follow-up in site, it appears Perretti's mixed martial arts contributions are all in the past. And while many have forgotten his role in the sport's creation, he will be sure to remind anyone who will listen.

"They [Zuffa] were born on third base," Perretti said. "And they think they hit a triple."

Petey, My Heart!

MMA's most infamous verbal submission, or urban myth? Two fights into his return to mixed martial arts after a four-year stint in **professional wrestling**, **Ken Shamrock** was absolutely tearing it up against iron-jawed wrestler **Kazuyuki Fujita** at **Pride 10**. Miraculously, Shamrock was able to keep the fight standing, and consistently landed clean head shots that would have finished virtually anyone else. But late in the first round, pressed into the corner by the relentless Fujita, Shamrock ran out of steam. Then it happened: an exhausted Shamrock said *something* to his cornerman **Pete Williams** that caused him to throw in the towel. But what? Did he really exclaim, "Petey, my heart!" as internet legend has it? "I remember my heart was coming through my chest and I was seeing white spots," Shamrock told radio host Bob Carson. "I don't remember exactly what I said. It was a long time ago."

In Their Own Words: Ken Shamrock on training for Kazuyuki Fujita

"I had some issues that were really weighing on me heavy. I was going through a divorce and my kids were basically dropped off on me two or three weeks before the fight. I had a two-bedroom apartment and suddenly four children living there. They just got dropped off and left there. I was scrambling to try and provide for them. I completely lost focus on everything I was doing. I had some health issues, like high blood pressure and everything that comes along with that. It was a bad time for me. But you know what, man? It was a learning experience. I was able to get in there and do the best I could. It happened the way it happened, and that's the way it is. I would not sacrifice my family to win that fight."

Petruzelli, Seth

Nickname: The Silverback

Height: 6'

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 12/3/79

Debut: WVF: Battlejax (8/26/00)

Career Record: 12-5

Notable Wins: Dan Severn (KOTC 32); Kimbo Slice (EliteXC: Heat)

Notable Losses: Matt Hamill (UFC: The Final Chapter); Wilson Gouveia (UFC Fight Night 9)

As far as we know, Seth Petruzelli is the only Smoothie King franchisee to hold a win over **Dan Severn**. He also managed both to shatter the myth of **Kimbo Slice** and to kill an entire MMA organization over the course of a mere three days. Seth Petruzelli, in short, is a hero.

After he crashed out of the second season of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** with a tough split decision loss to Brad Imes, and then out of the **UFC** altogether after back-to-back losses to **Matt Hamill** and Wilson Gouveia, there was every reason to think that was the last we'd see of Seth Petruzelli under the bright lights of the sport's biggest stage. But **EliteXC**, with its prime-time CBS network television deal, and a main event that fell apart at the last minute, made an offer Seth Petruzelli couldn't refuse.

EliteXC was in a bad way. **Ken Shamrock**, one day after holding up CBS for more money, was medically disqualified from taking part in his bout with YouTube sensation Kimbo Slice after a light, pre-fight workout session ended with a nasty cut over Shamrock's left eye. The promoters turned to Petruzelli, scheduled to face light heavyweight Aaron Rosa on the undercard, and offered him a spot against the man *Rolling Stone* magazine dubbed "The King of The Web Brawlers."

In Their Own Words: Seth Petruzelli on fighting Kimbo Slice

"I was warming up for my undercard fight and I was about 45 minutes from going out for my match. They told me Ken Shamrock was hurt and offered me the Kimbo fight and I accepted right away. I thought it would be awesome. The nerves actually kind of went away when they offered me that fight. I was nervous about my undercard fight, but the pressure kind of went away because there was nothing to lose. It was a win-win situation. I was taking it on short notice so if I went out there and lost, well, I did my best. If I won, obviously all this would happen.

"All I remember is him rushing me. And I saw his chin stick out. I was trying to throw a push kick and his chin stuck out and I threw kind of like a jab hook and caught him right on his chin. He went down to his knees and all I remember was seeing the blood on the ground and following up. I kept going and going and going. I knew if I just kept punching him the ref was going to have to jump in."

Proving definitively that the web is not the cage, Petruzelli, standing on one leg, dropped Slice with what looked like a nothing right hand seconds into the fight. Slice never recovered, and Petruzelli pounded him out for a TKO win 14 seconds into the first round. EliteXC's Jared Shaw, horrified, berated the referee for allowing supposedly illegal strikes to the back of Slice's head. Excitable CBS announcer Gus Johnson called it "the most remarkable victory in the history of mixed martial arts." Not exactly: Petruzelli was a legitimate, if undistinguished, MMA fighter, whereas Slice was one promotion's fantasy of what an MMA fighter might be.

Slice was finished, but Petruzelli wasn't. Two days later, talking to a Florida radio show about the strange, last-minute circumstances that led up to the fight, Petruzelli had this to say: "The promoters kinda hinted to me and they gave me the money to stand and throw with him; they didn't want me to take him down. Let's just put it that way. It was worth my while to try and stand up punch him." Although Petruzelli would later claim to have been misunderstood, and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation investigated and found no wrongdoing, the mere suggestion of this kind of impropriety took its toll. EliteXC went from the UFC's most credible rival to a laughingstock overnight. Less than a month after Petruzelli's right hand shut down Kimbo Slice, his loose lips helped shut the doors of EliteXC for good.

Positional hierarchy

Once lightweight champion **B.J. Penn** had challenger **Kenny Florian** where he wanted him in the main event of **UFC 101** — tired, on his back, holding fast — the Philadelphia crowd snapped to attention. Although Florian is a legitimate **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt, he was out of his depth against “The Prodigy,” and the Philly fans knew it. Florian managed to entangle one of Penn’s legs between both of his, offering him some measure of defense, but it was clear Penn wasn’t content to settle into Florian’s **half-guard**: he wanted to pass to **mount** and finish the fight. As Penn pushed down on Florian’s thigh, trying to create enough space to swing his trapped leg clear, the crowd responded as though someone had landed a solid one-two combination. They weren’t responding to a successful transition from half-guard to a dominant, potentially fight-ending position — that would come a little later, when Florian’s defenses were broken down even further. At that moment, the Philadelphia fans were responding to Penn’s mere attempt to pass the half-guard. “The audience *cheers* for that,” color commentator **Joe Rogan** said with a hint of surprise, “which shows you how educated mixed martial arts fans are now.”

It wasn’t that long ago that any action on the ground more subtle than an elbow to the face or a match-ending choke or joint lock would be met with impatience or, at best, indifference from the live audience. The ground game is at once the heart of mixed martial arts and the most difficult facet of the sport for newcomers to grasp. The first-time viewer sees two fighters entangled on the mat, working tactically, methodically — and, at times, desperately — towards *something*, but what, exactly? Why, under a torrent of blows, expend so much energy and effort to change slightly the position of a leg, the angle of the hips? Because, in short, it makes all the difference. One minute, with just one of B.J. Penn’s legs held between his ankles, Kenny Florian was in a position of relative safety. The next, with that leg freed, the end was in sight, and inevitable. Position is everything.

Although there can be (and often is) disagreement among martial artists about the finer points and relative merits of one ground position versus another, usually based on stylistic or personal preference, there are certain general, accepted truths about the hierarchy of positions in modern mixed martial arts competition that seem — for now, at least — fixed.

First off, all else being equal, it’s better to be on top than on bottom. Although this sounds obvious, it was not apparent in early MMA, where Brazilian Jiu-jitsu practitioners were able to win from their backs with regularity against hapless fighters unfamiliar with the realities of submission

grappling. But as the sport has evolved, submission defense has improved markedly among even non-grapplers. As submissions from bottom positions have become rarer, the intuitive advantages of fighting from the top have re-asserted themselves. Better to strike an opponent who is beneath you, his head inches from the mat, than to work uphill.

That said, the **guard**, in which the bottom fighter controls his opponent's movements with his legs and hips, remains a fundamentally neutral position, or as near neutral as exists on the ground. If the bottom fighter is a far more advanced submission grappler than his opponent, it's entirely possible that the guard will prove to be to his advantage. If the top fighter is a particularly dangerous **ground and pound** specialist, then the advantage in the guard will in all likelihood be his. But given comparable levels of skill, the wide array of sweeps and submissions available to the bottom fighter and the striking advantage and opportunities for positional improvement open to the top fighter are, roughly, a wash.

As the fighter on top frees a leg and progresses to top half-guard (half-mount), the striking advantage he enjoyed in guard increases, particularly if he's able to keep his opponent flat on his back, rather than on his side, and he can begin to work towards a variety of chokes and arm locks. The bottom fighter from this position will look to set up a half-guard sweep, escape to his feet, or take something of a long shot on a submission attempt — but principally he'll look to reestablish his full guard, knowing that things are not, from his perspective, moving in the right direction. In **gi** grappling, there are circumstances in which the bottom player can be extremely dangerous from half-guard, but this is far less often the case in mixed martial arts.

Once the top fighter has passed the guard completely, both legs freed from the bottom fighter's entanglements, he has established a clearly dominant position. Whether the top fighter favors the mount or one of the many variations of **side control**, either way he seriously constrains his opponent's movements, threatens with a wide assortment of submissions, and enjoys a distinct striking advantage. Needless to say, the bottom fighter will do whatever he can to sweep his opponent from this position, in a best case scenario, or, failing that, to work his way back to the much safer half-guard. From underneath mount or side control, submission possibilities are minimal, striking options are poor — this is, in short, not the place to be.

The only worse place to be is **rear mount**, a position that affords virtually no offensive possibilities to the defending fighter. This is where the over-matched Kenny Florian found himself once B.J. Penn passed his half-guard in front of that keen Philadelphia crowd. Penn mounted and forced Florian to

turn and expose his back with a flurry of blows to the head. Penn took the back, sunk his hooks deep to establish rear mount, and began hunting for the **rear naked choke**. Florian, ever game, did his best to roll and escape, but Penn seamlessly transitioned from rear mount to mount and back again — from dominance to dominance to dominance — until he slipped his arm across the challenger's throat, and forced the grimacing Florian to concede the bout. Position is everything.

See also **guard**, **half-guard**, **mount**, **rear mount**, **north-south**, and **side control**

Pride Fighting Championships

Tokyo's Pride Fighting Championships began with a single premise: could **professional wrestling** star **Nobuhiko Takada** fight for real? That question was quickly answered in the negative, but it didn't stop parent companies Kakutougi Revolution Spirits and later Dream Stage Entertainment from turning what was intended as a one-off event built around Takada and **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** legend **Rickson Gracie** into Japan's most successful mixed martial arts promotion. Before it collapsed under the weight of a yakuza scandal, Pride set the standard with its top-notch production values and a roster of international talent second to none.

Early Pride, however, was borderline unwatchable — unless you happen to be a fan of listless 30-minute draws with the occasional worked match thrown into the mix. After Takada's quick submission loss to Gracie in the main event of the inaugural show, the company's priority was to rehabilitate their star and promote a rematch, and Pride was not above staging fights rather than risk his drawing power. There can be little doubt Takada's Pride 3 win over Kyle Sturgeon was a sham, but if it helped pack the Tokyo Dome for the Gracie rematch that followed a few months later, it was good business as far as Pride officials were concerned. After Takada's second loss to Gracie, **Mark Coleman** was the next American paid to do the honors in Pride's ongoing efforts to legitimate their pro wrestling hero.

Although Takada was never able to translate his gift for impressively realistic fake fighting into competitive success in Pride, one of his pro wrestling understudies, **Kazushi Sakuraba**, went on to become one of the most accomplished fighters in all of mixed martial arts. He began turning heads with a grappling classic against **Carlos Newton** at Pride 3 and a strong showing against **Vitor Belfort**, and then came the Gracies: **Royler**, **Royce**, **Renzo**, **Ryan**, each falling in turn. Sakuraba combined the showman flair of professional wrestling with submission grappling skills of the highest order and succeeded where Takada

had failed. In the process, Sakuraba became the face of Pride to the tens of thousands who attended live events and the prime time audience of millions watching at home on Fuji TV.

Sakuraba's winning ways ended abruptly when he ran into **Wanderlei Silva**, who stopped Pride's great hero three times in just over two years to establish himself as the king of Pride's middleweight (205 pounds) division. Silva claimed his middleweight title in November 2001 at Pride 17, the same event that saw **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** become Pride's first heavyweight champion with a win over **Heath Herring**. Silva would hold his title until Pride's second last show, six years later; Nogueira's reign would be comparatively short-lived as the unstoppable **Fedor Emelianenko** soon emerged as the greatest heavyweight in the history of the sport. Pride would award lightweight (160 pounds) and welterweight (183 pounds) titles after a 2005 tournament largely contested in their secondary Bushido series, with **Takanori Gomi** and **Dan Henderson** emerging as the respective champions.

Throughout the Pride era, its Grand Prix tournaments were the organization's crowning glory. The 2000 Grand Prix is best remembered as the site of Sakuraba's epic 90-minute battle against Royce Gracie, but it also featured Mark Coleman's return to championship form after falling on hard times. The 2003 middleweight Grand Prix brought **Chuck Liddell** to Japan to try his luck against the best collection of 205-pound fighters in the world, and come up short to **Quinton Jackson**, who in turn was blown out by Wanderlei Silva, still on top of his game. Silva's closely contested semi-final bout against **Hidehiko Yoshida** helped turn the Japanese **judo** legend into Pride's top native star as Sakuraba's long fade continued. In 2004, the heavyweights had their turn, and to no one's surprise Emelianenko and Nogueira met in the finals, with Emelianenko again emerging the victor. The 2005 edition of the middleweight Grand Prix signaled the end of Silva's unquestioned dominance over the division, but **Mauricio Rua** kept the tournament title within the **Chute Boxe** camp with a devastating knockout of **Ricardo Arona**. A somewhat anticlimactic 2006 openweight tournament marked **Mirko Cro Cop**'s first major championship, but at that point the writing was already on the wall.

On June 5, 2006, Fuji TV canceled its television contract with Dream Stage Entertainment, Pride's parent company, citing breach of contract after prominent Japanese weekly *Shukan Gendai* ran a series of articles alleging strong yakuza ties. Seia Kawamata, promoter of a New Year's Eve 2003 fight card called Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye, stated in an interview with the magazine that he was the victim of yakuza intimidation after he signed Pride champion Fedor



Emelianenko to fight on his show. According to Kawamata, not only was Pride head Nobuhiko Sakakibara aware of this intimidation — he was in the room when yakuza directly threatened Kawamata's life. Without the support of network television, the promotion was doomed.

After a few last gasps, including a pair of brilliant Las Vegas shows, Pride closed its doors. **Lorenzo and Frank Fertitta**, the men behind the **UFC**, bought Pride's assets and intended to run events in Japan indefinitely. But Japanese networks did not receive the new American owners with any enthusiasm whatsoever, and a return to television proved impossible. The Fertittas closed Pride's Japanese office October 4, 2007, and Dream Stage Entertainment employees took up with K-1 to form **Dream**, the successor to both Pride and K-1's **Hero's** series. Most of Pride's top talent went to the **UFC** — with the notable exception of the elusive Emelianenko, much to **UFC** President **Dana White's** frustration.

Pride's death signaled the end of any real international competition. **Dream** and **Sengoku** have their Japanese niche, and American challengers will no doubt continue to emerge so long as MMA remains a hot commodity, but with Pride gone it's clear that the true future of the sport both in America and abroad rests with the **UFC**.

Professional wrestling

Pro wrestling and MMA are like peas in a pod. Although many MMA fans don't like to hear that, the fact remains that MMA and wrestling have a long-running historical connection, both in Japan and in the Americas.

The sport in the Americas traces its path back to Japanese judoka **Mitsuya Maeda**. Maeda was one of the Kodokan's top fighters; his mission was to spread the art of **judo** far and wide, all around the world. His round trip ticket as a judo emissary was essentially paid for by his nascent pro wrestling career.

Maeda liked testing himself, and in the United States the men most likely to give him a contest were **catch wrestlers** on the professional circuit. Wrestling may have been a show, but its roots were in real contests. While the shows for the fans were staged, plenty of hard sparring went on in the gym before the matches. Soon Maeda joined their traveling sideshow and found himself traveling to Europe, Mexico, and finally Brazil.

It was in Brazil that Maeda, the professional wrestler, taught the basics of judo to a young Brazilian named **Carlos Gracie**. Gracie's nephew **Rorion Gracie** took these teachings, after a generation of practicing and perfecting the care-



fully crafted ground techniques, and created the **Ultimate Fighting Championship** to showcase them. In a very real sense, the UFC would not exist without professional wrestling. Not only did a pro wrestler help create **Gracie Jiu-jitsu**, but the leading stars of the early UFC were either pro wrestlers (**Ken Shamrock** and **Dan Severn**) or pro wrestling-style characters (**Tank Abbott** and **Kimo Leopoldo**).

In Japan, the connections between MMA and pro wrestling were more overt. The spiritual founder of MMA there was pro wrestler **Antonio Inoki**, who fought Muhammad Ali in an early proto-MMA match all the way back in 1976. Inoki later took on a variety of martial artists, proclaiming himself the World Martial Arts Champion.

Many of Inoki's successors took his example and went a step further than he ever imagined. Star wrestlers like **Nobuhiko Takada** and **Akira Maeda** popularized "shoot-style" wrestling promotions, presenting professional wrestling matches designed to look real. **Masakatsu Funaki** and **Minoru Suzuki** brought professional wrestling full circle; their **Pancrase** promotion was legitimate pro wrestling. The rules were the same as traditional pro wrestling. The only difference was a major one: the action was real.

In addition to Pancrase, the other major MMA promotions in the country all had wrestling roots. **Shooto** was the brainchild of Satoru Sayama, the legendary wrestler called Tiger Mask. Akira Maeda ran **Rings**, a combination of shoot-style pro wrestling and, later, legitimate fighting. The biggest promotion of all, the **Pride Fighting Championship**, was built to showcase Takada. When he failed twice against **Rickson Gracie**, his successor, **Kazushi Sakuraba**, was also a former professional wrestler.

Today the professional wrestling connection in the UFC is as strong as ever. The promotion's biggest star is former WWE wrestler **Brock Lesnar**. Matchmakers have also found that wrestling-style antics, combative interviews, and manufactured feuds between fighters sell better than pure sport. While UFC officials bristle when compared to wrestling, the connections have never been more apparent. More than sixty pro wrestlers have entered the Octagon and of the six men inducted into the UFC Hall of Fame, half have been professional wrestlers.

Pulver, Jens

Nickname: Little Evil

Weight: 145-155 lbs

Debut: Bas Rutten Invitational 2 (4/24/99)

Notable Wins: Joe Stevenson (Bas Rutten Invitational 3); John Lewis (UFC 28); Caol Uno (UFC 30); B.J. Penn (UFC 35)

Height: 5'7"

Born: 12/6/75

Career Record: 22-13-1



Notable Losses: Din Thomas (WEF: New Blood Conflict); Duane Ludwig (UCC 12); Takanori Gomi (Pride Shockwave 2004); Hayato Sakurai (Pride Bushido 9); B.J. Penn (*The Ultimate Fighter* 5 Finale); Urijah Faber (WEC 34, WEC 38)

You realize right away that Jens Pulver is a little different the first time you meet him. He has an intense, penetrating gaze that captivates. Pulver's right eye is blue and his left eye is brown. They are eyes have seen things they never should have.

Pulver was abused as a child, beaten and ridiculed by his father, a semi-professional horse jockey with a grudge against the world. He once held a gun in seven-year-old Jens' mouth and told him he was only alive because "he wasn't worth the bullets."

Many fighters come from similar backgrounds. They've been hardened, perhaps allowing them the strength to put their bodies and minds through the torment it takes to become a professional pugilist. Pulver became a solid wrestler, a junior college star and a starter at Boise State before he injured his wrists so badly that he called it a career.

It was in college that Pulver discovered MMA and found out he had a knack for throwing down in underground matches. He was discovered by **UFC**

In Their Own Words: Jens Pulver on fighting at his ideal weight

"A lot of people say, 'You got demoted, you got dropped down.' No way. I asked to go to 145. I wanted to go to the WEC. At the end of the day, I am a pioneer. I helped pioneer the 155-pound weight class and I want to help do the same thing here. At 145 I've got nine fights: eight by knockout and one by submission. At 145 pounds or any other weight, my signature move is my left hand. I hit like a ton of bricks. Everybody understands that. One thing you know about me is that I am going to bite down on my mouthpiece and throw down until the fight is over. For a little guy I've got a lot of pop."

matchmaker **John Perretti** at the **Bas Rutten** Invitational in 1999. Perretti was looking to form a lighter weight division in the UFC, similar to the one found in Japan's **Shooto**. The action there was fast-paced and non-stop and Perretti, a long-time proponent of smaller fighters dating back to his days with **Extreme Fighting**, thought Pulver could be one of the showcase fighters in this new division.

Artistically, the smaller fighters were a great success, and Pulver stood at the front of the pack as the best in the division. He earned a title shot with a stunning win over longtime standout **John Lewis** at UFC 28. Lewis had starred in both Shooto and Extreme Fighting, but lasted just seconds with Pulver before a wicked left hook dropped him. Pulver proceeded to beat **Caol Uno**, the Shooto star who was widely considered the best fighter in the weight class, in a five-round classic to win what was then called the UFC bantamweight title.

Now training with the legendary **Pat Miletich**, Pulver was part of a team that included four current or future world champions (Pulver, Miletich, **Matt Hughes**, and **Tim Sylvia**). His fighting skills were at a peak, and he proved it by avenging his teammate Hughes' two losses to **Dennis Hallman**. Then Pulver faced the challenge of his career: a young fighter named **B.J. Penn**.

Penn was special. Known as "The Prodigy," he was a jiu-jitsu expert who also had power in his hands. While Pulver employed the cautious **sprawl and brawl** approach to fighting, using his **wrestling** base to keep the fight standing where he had confidence in his big left hand, Penn was explosive and unpredictable. While Jens had struggled over five long rounds with Uno, Penn had destroyed the Japanese fighter in seconds. Despite his success in the division, Pulver went into the fight an underdog. For a temperamental and sensitive young man, this was just the fuel he needed to find the edge necessary to tame

Penn. He won a majority decision and was in tears after the fight. “Sometimes hype isn’t enough,” the champion proclaimed. “This is my fucking cage.”

The words had a ring of truth to them at the time but are ironic now, considering Pulver would never again win a fight in the famed Octagon. A contract dispute in 2002 cost him four years in the middle of his fighting prime. He traveled the world, fighting in Canada, Japan, and Hawaii. While Pulver found some success at his natural weight of 145 pounds, there simply weren’t money fights there.

When he moved up to lightweight to take on the best fighters in Japan, **Takanori Gomi** and **Hayato Sakurai**, he was too small and, perhaps, too limited to win. Pulver had become predictable. He had eschewed wrestling entirely, and even his standup attack was easy to combat once you knew that the left hand would be his primary weapon.

In 2006 Pulver was ready to return to the **Zuffa** empire. The idea was to reintroduce him with a tune-up fight and then have him coach ***The Ultimate Fighter 5*** opposite old rival B.J. Penn. Little-known Joe Lauzon threw a wrench into these carefully laid plans by knocking Pulver out in just 47 seconds. Pulver went on to coach the show despite the embarrassing loss. This was particularly awkward, as Lauzon was also on the show, as a cast member looking for a shot at the big time. It was the first time one of the superstar coaches had actually lost a fight to one of the show’s inexperienced contenders.

Penn was fired up for the rematch. For years Pulver had talked and talked about the fight, which had become his career’s singular achievement. Penn was ready to silence him and choked Pulver out in the second round. It was

In Their Own Words: Jens Pulver on leaving the UFC

“I just wanted to be the highest paid lightweight. I was the champ. I beat everybody they put in front of me. I felt I deserved it. Looking back? Sure, I regret it now. If I had that opportunity to do over again, knowing what I know now, I wouldn’t have left. But you don’t know. I love the guys, but I don’t know if it will ever be like it was. Me and Dana – I don’t know if it will be patched up. We’ll probably never be friends again because of it.

“I don’t get to talk to Dana like I used to be able to. I can’t even leave a message for him. I’ve talked to him twice in the last four years. I used to fly on his plane and hang out with him every day. It is what it is, man. That’s how small I’ve gotten, that’s how big he’s gotten. It’s cool. It doesn’t mean I love him any less. We just don’t talk.”

obvious that Jens had no future at lightweight. But Zuffa thought he still had value, using him to help make stars out of their crop of talented but unknown 145-pounders in the **WEC**.

Even against these fledgling fighters, Pulver looked out of his league. He lost four of five **WEC** fights, but he served his purpose. Two back-and-forth encounters with Pulver helped make **Urijah Faber** a superstar in the eyes of the fans. Now, in his mid-thirties and on the losing end of four fights in a row, Pulver doesn't even have the stature to make a name for a young contender. After losing eight of his last eleven, an emotional Pulver called it quits after being choked out by Josh Grispi at **WEC 41**.

Of course, retirements in MMA never seem to stick. Most of the fighters who paved the way for the sport's success never made the huge paydays that could support a fighter into retirement. Soon enough, Pulver was back in the cage. But after one too many losses, **WEC** officials decided enough was enough. Like his contemporary **Chuck Liddell**, if Jens Pulver fights again, it won't be inside the Octagon.



Quadros, Stephen

Stephen Quadros is a lifelong martial artist who segued a stint as a judge at **UFC 8** into a career as an MMA announcer. Quadros doesn't have any experience in the cage, but that hasn't made him shy about offering his opinion about, well, everything. This has been controversial, because those kinds of critiques are usually reserved for other fighters, who presumably have the bona fides to criticize their peers. Quadros doesn't always call the action, as much as announce what he thinks should be happening and what he thinks the fighters should be doing at any given moment. Although this is grating to some of the fighters he criticizes, Quadros does have a rare gift for breaking down the action in the cage and explaining to a novice fan what is happening and why.



In Their Own Words: Stephen Quadros on teaming with Bas Rutten

"One of my fondest memories about when Bas Rutten and I worked together with the old Pride shows is when we were going to introduce two dolls that were available for purchase on the Pride Web site. One doll was of **Wanderlei Silva** and the other was of **Don Frye**. Now, I do a dead-on Frye impersonation. But this put Bas at a bit of a loss for what to say that would match my Don vocal caricature, because Wanderlei in real life did not speak English during any of our interviews with him. So I told Bas to just say three things over and over again: 'Rudimar,' '**Muay Thai**,' and '**Vale Tudo**.'

"So we're doing the recap and it's time for me to go to the dolls and I do my Don voice and Bas says his little bit and then I get set to toss it to the next fight, figuring we're done with the dolls. But then suddenly Bas, in a complete improvisation, said to me, 'Hey, let's do a little staredown.' Fortunately the cameraman, who was Japanese and probably didn't understand a single word that we were saying, had the instinct to zoom in on the dolls. So while the dolls are facing off we are doing this completely ridiculous voice over, like we are two little boys playing army or something: [in Don Frye voice] 'Hey, Wanderlei, I'm not scared of you, et cetera.' and Bas started saying in a broken Portuguese/Dutch accent, 'Rudimar, Vale Tuuuuudo, Rudimar. . . . Then I turned my Don Frye doll in a way and had it slug the Wanderlei doll in the face, all the while making a **kung fu** movie whoosh-thud-type sound effect. Bas returned fire with his doll. Then suddenly the dolls are duking it out in a camera closeup, à la *Team America, World Police*. It was us totally reverting back to childhood. Priceless and hysterical!"

Quadros, along with his partner **Bas Rutten**, was part of what many considered the best broadcast team in the sport. The two called the fights for the Japanese promotion **Pride** and were best known for the goofy pre-fight skits and their rare ability to fill the dead air during deadly boring fights. When Jerry Millen became Pride producer, Quadros was let go. He landed on his feet, announcing for a variety of promotions, and can currently be heard on **Strikeforce** Challengers shows on Showtime with his partners Mauro Ranallo and **Pat Miletich**.



Randleman, Kevin

Nickname: The Monster

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 205-225 lbs

Born: 8/10/71

Debut: UVF 4 (10/22/96)

Career Record: 17-15

Notable Wins: Maurice Smith (UFC 19); Pete Williams (UFC 23); Pedro Rizzo (UFC 26); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Total Elimination 2004)

Notable Losses: Bas Rutten (UFC 20); Randy Couture (UFC 28); Fedor Emelianenko (Pride Critical Countdown 2004)

Kevin Randleman is one of MMA's greatest enigmas. He is capable of defeating the sport's very best, as he showed by dismantling Pedro Rizzo and shocking **Mirko Cro Cop**. At the same time, he is also capable of losing to the most ordinary journeyman like **Ron Waterman** and **Kazuhiko Nakamura**. Despite winning the **UFC** heavyweight championship, his career has to be considered a disappointment, if only because of glimpses of the brilliance that could have been.

Simply put, Randleman is one of the best athletes ever to step into the cage. He was a two-time national champion wrestler at Ohio State and joined former coach **Mark Coleman** in the "**Hammer House**" (one of early MMA's most dominant fighting teams). His rise to the top was explosive. Even though he wrestled in college at 167 and then 177 pounds, when he made his MMA debut he was a ripped 220 pounds, lending fuel to the fire that the influx of American wrestlers into the sport were powered by a mix of anger and **steroids**, a charge Randleman has repeatedly and strenuously denied.

Like many of his fellow wrestlers, Randleman learned his trade in the rough world of Brazilian **Vale Tudo**. By the time he reached the UFC in 1999, he was ready to compete with the very best in the world. He beat former champion **Maurice Smith** to earn a shot at the heavyweight championship. With the title on the line, Randleman lost one of the most controversial fights in UFC history to **Bas Rutten**. Despite Randleman being on top almost



the entire contest, the judges went with the charismatic Dutchman, crowning him the new heavyweight champion.

Rutten almost immediately retired and Randleman got a second chance at glory. This time he wasn't going to be denied, running over **Lion's Den** stand-out **Pete Williams** to win the title.

His first defense was emblematic of his entire career. There were high hopes for the new champion and his challenger Pedro Rizzo at **UFC 24**. It was a bout that would have to wait three months. Warming up backstage, Randleman slipped while doing his patented high leaps and cracked his head on the cement floor. He was taken to the hospital and the highly touted main event was off. Although Randleman went on to beat Rizzo at **UFC 26**, his career never completely recovered from the debacle.

After losing the title to **Randy Couture** in a tremendous contest at **UFC 28**, Randleman tried to reinvent himself as a light heavyweight, but was immediately knocked down the rankings in that division by a **Chuck Liddell** left hook. Soon Randleman was on his way to join his mentor Mark Coleman in Japan's **Pride Fighting Championships**, and the rest of his career was to be a mixture of the bizarre and the sublime.

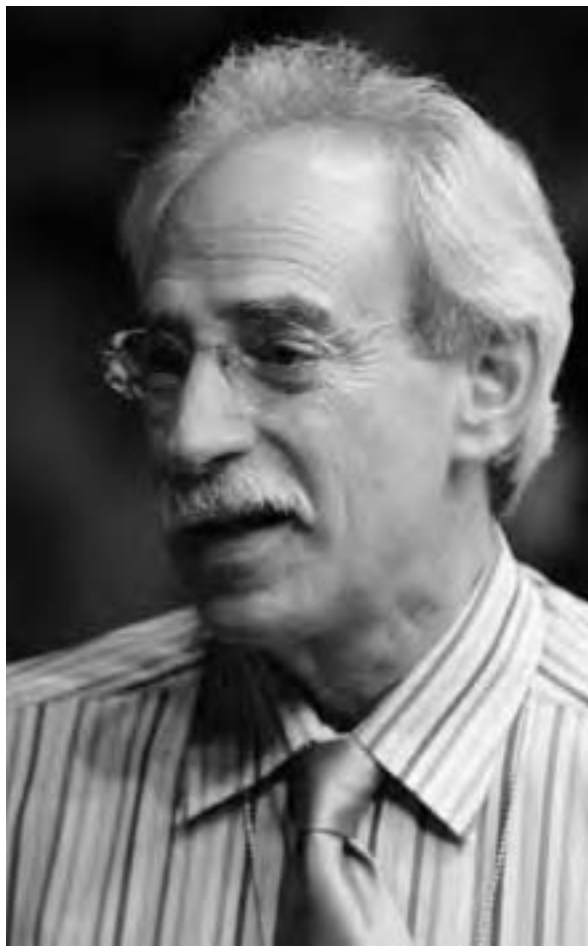
Randleman made short work of opponents meant to build his status in the eyes of the Japanese fans, before losing six of his next seven fights. His only respite from steadily mounting losses was the flash knockout of Filipovic, at the time one of the most feared fighters in the world. Randleman caught the Croatian with a fast right hand and knocked him cold. He bristled at the idea that the win was a fluke, but Cro Cop set matters straight with a quick submission win in the inevitable rematch.

Even in defeat, Randleman often amazed. At Pride Critical Countdown 2004, Randleman launched **Fedor Emelianenko** — widely considered to be the best fighter in the world — with a devastating suplex. The Russian recovered quickly to win via submission, but Randleman's throw took a deserving place among the greatest highlights in MMA history. It was Randleman in a nutshell: a teasing glance at potential greatness, followed by a disastrous loss.

Ratner, Marc

Marc Ratner's support for the sport of mixed martial arts has been all over the map. As the Executive Director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, he was one of the **UFC's** biggest enemies. He once testified in front of Congress that MMA had no future with no rules. Later, he joined Senator John McCain to badmouth the sport on *Larry King Live*, debating against **Ken Shamrock** and UFC owner **Bob Meyrowitz**.

Ratner, to his credit, was open-minded enough to give the sport a second chance. As the UFC strived to clean up its own act, with the **Jeff Blatnick**-led Mixed Martial Arts Council forming a set of comprehensive rules, Ratner recognized that it was a sport that could be safe for participants with the right kind of regulation. He helped create the **Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts**, and brought the sport to Nevada in 2001.



In Their Own Words: Ratner on his initial thoughts on MMA

"When I first became aware of it, they advertised no-holds-barred, no rules, anything goes. I knew as a regulator it would never be in Nevada. I went on *Larry King*, Senator McCain and myself, arguing against MMA. The former owner, Bob Meyrowitz and Ken Shamrock, a fighter you might have heard of, were on the other side. I said then, to the world, that we would never have it in Nevada. As long as there were no rules, it wasn't a sport you could regulate.

"In 2000, the state of New Jersey under director Larry Hazzard worked with promoters and other regulators to create what we called the Unified Rules. I was on the phone with them for four hours working out the details. Once there were rules, it became a sport that could become regulated. The state of Nevada approved the sport and we had our first fight card in September 2001."

As executive director, Ratner was widely considered to be the most respected man in combat sports. He was well liked and held in high esteem in a business where everyone has enemies. Ratner didn't just direct officials and referees; he was one. On Saturdays in the fall, Ratner could be found on the football field, a line judge for the Mountain West Conference who was good enough to work three bowl games.

In 2006, the best regulator in the game went to work for the UFC, joining **Zuffa** as the vice president of Government and Regulatory Affairs. Today his job is far removed from his time as a prominent UFC critic. He travels around the country and the world, working to get the sport of MMA approved throughout the nation and working with commissions internationally to make sure the shows go off without a hitch. The former ferocious detractor has now become the sport's most powerful advocate.

Rear mount (Back mount)

A dominant ground fighting position — perhaps the most dominant ground fighting position — in which the attacker straddles his opponent from behind, hooking his feet inside his opponent's thighs to control the hips. Alternatively, the attacker may choose to triangle his legs around his opponent's torso, increasing control and restricting his opponent's breathing. The rear mount can be achieved with the opponent face down and the attacker on top, or with the opponent face up and the attacker beneath. In either case, the attacker is able to threaten with strikes, the **rear naked choke**, and, if he is willing to sacrifice position to attempt a submission, the **arm bar**, while his op-

ponent is effectively unable to attack. The defending fighter must work to improve his position, creating enough space to roll into the attacker's **guard** or **half-guard**. Direct escapes to **side control** are possible, though far more difficult to execute against skilled grapplers.

See also **positional hierarchy**

Rear naked choke

A chokehold in which the attacker, from behind, encircles the opponent's neck with his arms and restricts the flow of either blood or oxygen, depending on which variation of the technique is employed. The choke is "naked" in the sense that it is performed without the aid of a **gi**. Known as the *mata leão* ("lion killer") in **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** and *hadaka jime* ("naked choke") in **judo**, the rear naked choke is among the most frequently applied holds in mixed martial arts. When properly applied, it simply ends fights — by submission, or, failing that, unconsciousness.

The variation most commonly seen in MMA restricts blood flow. The attacker wraps his strangling arm around the opponent's neck such that the elbow of the strangling arm is tucked beneath the opponent's chin. The hand of the strangling arm is placed palm down against the biceps of the supporting arm, which, in turn, reaches behind the opponent's head or neck to secure the hold. Think **Matt Hughes** glued to **Frank Trigg**'s back at **UFC 45** in a rare standing application of the technique. As Hughes locked his arms into position and the effects of the choke took hold, Trigg dramatically tapped out as he fell backwards to the mat, seconds from unconsciousness.

When applied as a blood choke, the rear naked choke is painless and nearly instant. This is not true of the variation that attacks the trachea. With hands clasped, the attacker brings the inner edge of his wrist forcefully against the opponent's windpipe, restricting airflow, causing pain and inducing panic. Although this variation is seen rarely in MMA, it's the preferred method of heavyweight great **Fedor Emelianenko**, who used the technique to finish both iron-headed Japanese wrestler **Kazuyuki Fujita** and former UFC champion **Tim Sylvia**. Sylvia, asked to talk about the rarely seen choke in the post-fight press conference, answered, "I think it was on my windpipe. Because it hurt like hell."

Redbelt

Redbelt is, of all things, a 2008 mixed martial arts movie written and directed by celebrated playwright and filmmaker David Mamet. "In a lot

ways,” Mamet said, “it’s an American Samurai film. I think it’s a script Kurosawa would have liked.” But — and this is to say the *very* least — Kurosawa it ain’t.

Chiwetel Ejiofor plays Mike Terry, a down-on-his-luck **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** instructor who speaks almost entirely in maxims. Terry’s inability to make ends meet without relying on his wife’s income or her family’s business connections is supposed to signal the purity of his martial way (rather than, say, a stubborn inability to handle his business). Against his higher principles, and through a series of increasingly labored plot contrivances, Terry finds himself compelled to enter an MMA tournament in order to settle the debts of a former student’s widow. But the competition is crooked, a prestidigitator from Act One reappears, and nothing is as it seems!

Mamet, a BJJ purple belt under Renato Magno, cast prominent figures from MMA and elsewhere in the martial arts world wherever possible, including **Enson Inoue**, **Frank Trigg**, John Machado, Dan Inosanto, **Mike Goldberg**, and **Randy Couture** as television analyst Dylan Flinn, who gets off such zingers as, “I think boxing is as dead as Woodrow Wilson.” Nothing hangs together, and the film’s message about honor drifts from muddled to incoherent. But all of this awfulness was nearly redeemed by a strange but real sign of the sport’s cultural arrival: the remarkably incongruous sight of Randy Couture standing beside David Mamet on the red carpet.

Ribeiro, Vitor

Nickname: Shaolin

Height: 5’8”

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 2/24/79

Debut: WFA 1 (11/3/01)

Career Record: 20-4

Notable Wins: Tatsuya Kawajiri (Shooto: Year End Show 2002); Joachim Hansen (Shooto: Year End Show 2003); Mitsuhiro Ishida (Shooto Hawaii: Soljah Fight Night)

Notable Losses: Tatsuya Kawajiri (Shooto: Year End Show 2004); Gesias Cavalcante (Hero’s: Tournament Final); Shinya Aoki (Dream 10)

A **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** world champion several times over, “Shaolin” Ribeiro is one of the lightweight division’s top submission artists. In 2003, Ribeiro claimed **Shooto**’s welterweight (154 pounds) title with a win over the dangerous **Joachim Hansen**, finishing the fight by way of **arm triangle** choke — a technique that has become Shaolin’s signature, accounting for fully one third of his career victories. His title reign ended a year to the day later when Japanese slugger **Tatsuya Kawajiri** avenged an early decision loss, stopping Ribeiro in the second round with a flurry of punches. Ribeiro went on to a

successful stint in **Cage Rage**, where he captured the English promotion's light-weight championship in a bout with fellow Brazilian Jean Silva.

All of this earned Ribeiro a berth in K-1 **Hero's** 2007 middleweight (155 pounds) tournament, where he ran into **Gesias Cavalcante**, better known to Japanese fans as "JZ Calvin," in a bout that cost Shaolin more than a shot at the tournament title — it cost him a year. In a violent, one-sided beating that lasted only 35 seconds, Ribeiro suffered an eye injury that required retinal surgery and threatened his career. Making the most of his year away from the sport, Ribeiro opened a New York academy, and returned in 2009 to stop Olympic Greco-Roman **wrestling** medalist Katsuhiko Nagata in the first round, and to drop a disappointing decision to fellow grappling ace **Shinya Aoki**. As is often the case when two top submission fighters face each other under MMA rules, the fight turned into a middling kickboxing bout rather than the kind of grappling chess match fans had hoped for. Still, it speaks volumes that not even the great Aoki wanted anything to do with Vitor Ribeiro on the ground.

Rings

In 1989, the Universal Wrestling Federation was flying high, announcing a November 29 date at Japan's Tokyo Dome. They sold out the front row in less than five minutes. By the end of the first day, there were more than 40,000 tickets sold. The final tally was 60,000 in the building, a Japanese wrestling record. The group was formed by some of Japanese **pro wrestling's** biggest stars to present a new style of wrestling to the fans. Their leader, **Akira Maeda**, was very vocal about how phony traditional wrestling was. All the outlandish moves, leaps from the turnbuckles, and devastating strikes with steel chairs were obviously staged. This style of wrestling, they promised, was the real thing. And in a world before the **UFC** and **Pride**, many fans believed.

The contests were unmistakably fake, the results scripted and shared with both performers before the bout. But the action in the ring was based on reality. Kicks and open hand blows were hard and fast and on the ground the wrestlers used submission holds from **catch wrestling** and **judo**. It was no wonder that the wrestlers knew exactly how to mimic a real contest; their main instructor was Karl Gotch, the hooker known as the "God of Wrestling" in Japan.

The UWF had many of the same stars that would go on to build the MMA industry in Japan. Joining Maeda were **Nobuhiko Takada**, Yoshiaki Fujiwara, **Yoji Anjo**, **Masakatsu Funaki**, and **Minoru Suzuki**. There were, perhaps, too many stars, a collection of chiefs with no Indians. In 1991, this powder keg exploded. The stars all went a different direction. Takada formed the UWF, a

showier and more traditional form of professional wrestling. Funaki and Suzuki, after a pit stop in a UWF-style promotion led by Fujiwara, formed the first MMA promotion in Japan, called **Pancrase**, in 1993. And the biggest star of them all, Maeda, formed Rings.

To Maeda, Rings was more than a promotion or an organization of wrestlers. Maeda was thinking bigger than that. Like **Dana White** and **Lorenzo Fertitta**, Maeda saw what we would soon call MMA as a global sport, as big as soccer or baseball. He pursued this vision with a passion, forming a network of Rings promotions throughout the world, most importantly in Holland and Russia.

While Maeda saw the fighters of Rings as a network and collaboration, the cable television channel wowow that promoted his cards saw things differently. Like the fans, they saw Rings as a one-man show. So much so that the contract they signed with Rings included a unique stipulation: if Maeda did not fight, Rings did not get paid.

This created a tough situation for Maeda the promoter and Rings the promotion. Maeda had a vision to move towards real fights. The Rings undercard frequently had competitive bouts, while the more important matches at the top of the card were all scripted wrestling matches. They had to stay that way, despite a number of tough fighters available from Chris Doleman's gym in Holland and **Volk Han**'s Russian Top Team.

This was a vision that couldn't be carried out because Maeda was not ready for real fights. He was in his thirties and his body had been destroyed by years of hard sparring and professional wrestling. The wowow contract made things worse. He tore a ligament in his right knee, but worked through it. Rings needed him too much. Eventually the knee got so bad he could barely walk. Maeda waited until he could sign a new contract with the television network, working through the pain to protect his investment in Rings. In 1993, he had no choice but to get surgery.

It was a time of change for the sport in Japan. Many of the kickboxers Maeda brought to Japan through Rings, like Peter Aerts, joined with promoter Kaz Ishii to form K-1. At the same time, Funaki and Suzuki's Pancrase promotion revolutionized shoot-style wrestling by putting on fights up and down the card that were real. And then the UFC made its debut that November. Suddenly the brutal Rings matches were seen by the fans to be clearly just as fake as the matches Maeda mocked in the traditional wrestling organizations.

While Rings could no longer claim to be the leading promotion in Japan, they were still breaking new ground worldwide. Maeda helped create a bur-

geoning MMA revolution in Holland and Russia, not only bringing in fighters to compete in Japan, but also helping entrepreneurs to promote Rings events in Europe. In Japan the promotion was making the awkward transition from professional wrestling to MMA.

Maeda had a second knee surgery in 1996 and when he returned he was fat and out of shape — a shell of his former self, clearly on his way out. Rings brought in **Kiyoshi Tamura**, Takada's understudy in UWF, to be the heir apparent. Tamura was both a legitimate fighter and one of the best professional wrestlers in the world: the perfect man to bridge the gap between real and fake in Rings.

Tamura took a rare win from Maeda in 1997 on his way to becoming the Rings champion. He was expected to do it all; like Rings he would mix wrestling matches and real fights in his contests. It went wrong almost immediately. Tamura was talented, but only 180 pounds. His first fight as champion was against the lightly regarded Valentijn Overeem. Overeem had 50 pounds on Tamura and dominated him, making the champion and the promotion look bad. Tamura never recovered from the embarrassment; his opportunity to replace Maeda was lost, with his credibility, in a single bout. Tamura lost the title in his next fight, a worked wrestling match with Taniel Bitsadze.

Rings had one final show where the promotion mattered, where it was as big as any other in Japan, if only for a night. Maeda's retirement match was expected to be with **Rickson Gracie**. The storyline had even been built. Gracie had beaten Maeda's UWF rival Nobuhiko Takada and it was up to Maeda, as the senior man, to avenge wrestling's reputation. But Rings had the same trouble negotiating with Gracie that Takada's UWF did. The Brazilian star was adamantly opposed to doing a pro wrestling match, even if he was supposed to win in the end.

The replacement for Gracie was another legend. Russian Greco-Roman wrestler Alexander Karelin was considered by many to be the best wrestler in modern Olympic history. Karelin won three gold medals and was undefeated in international competition for 13 years before falling victim to American Rulon Gardner in his final match.

He was a credible opponent for a star like Maeda's closing match and Rings packed more than 17,000 fans into the Yokohama Arena to say goodbye to the legend. Karelin won the match and even used his famous Karelin Lift on Maeda. Unlike **Antonio Inoki**, Maeda didn't insist on winning his final match.

The company used the big platform and all of the nationwide media to try and rehabilitate Tamura. He beat Overeem in a rematch; wisely, this time Rings asked for a worked match. The crowd, however, refused to accept

Tamura on top. Attendance dwindled below 5,000 fans for all of Tamura's bouts as the headliner and the promotion was forced to make the change to legitimate MMA.

Before Rings made this monumental change, Maeda wanted to be sure he had a fighter who could compete with the world's very best. Tamura had been their candidate, but he was simply too small for the role. They found their man in Rings veteran **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka**. Kohsaka had been on the undercard of Rings' fights for years, but never made it far because of his lack of charisma. It turned out, however, that Kohsaka could fight. His breakout wins in the UFC convinced Maeda that he had his man. The King of Kings tournament was then created, bringing in fighters like **Renzo Gracie** and **Randy Couture** to headline a new era of Rings matches.

With what eventually became two King of Kings Tournaments, Rings was able to bring in some of the very best martial artists in the world, this time for legitimate competition. **Dan Henderson** won the tournament in 1999 and **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** took the top prize in 2000. Rings introduced many of the world's best fighters to the Japanese audience, including Henderson, Nogueira, **Ricardo Arona**, **Alistair Overeem**, and **Fedor Emelianenko**.

A pattern was soon apparent. No sooner would Rings develop a star than Pride Fighting Championships would sign them away. Takada's group treated Rings like it was a minor league training ground. Rings went out of business in February 2002 after more than a decade of revolutionizing the sport of MMA in Japan.

Rodriguez, Ricco

Nickname: Suave

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 250 lbs

Born: 8/19/77

Debut: Extreme Cage (3/25/99)

Career Record: 42-11

Notable Wins: Gary Goodridge (Pride 9); Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (UFC 37); Randy Couture (UFC 39)

Notable Losses: Tim Sylvia (UFC 41); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Total Elimination 2003); Antonio Silva (EliteXC: Street Certified); Travis Wiuff (Yamma Pit Fighting)

It's not often that a fighter comes into the cage for the first time as a heavy favorite, but when you are the first American heavyweight to win the **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** world championship much is expected of you. Ricco Rodriguez had not only won a bevy of jiu-jitsu championships; he was also the 1998 **ADCC** Submission Wrestling World Championship absolute champion. The poten-

tial was there to be one of the sport's all-time greats and he was well on his way. Then it all fell apart.

Rodriguez rose up the ranks quickly, winning seven fights in a row in **Pride** and the **UFC** (MMA's two major leagues at the time) to earn a title shot against the legendary **Randy Couture**. At UFC 39, Rodriguez achieved a dream, using his size and grappling acumen to overwhelm Couture in the fifth and final round. At 25, Rodriguez was the world champion and the sky was the limit. But behind the scenes, Rodriguez was falling apart.

Rodriguez had grown up in what he called "the ghetto of ghettos" in Patterson, New Jersey. He had never had any money, and the sudden celebrity and wealth was overwhelming. Living in Las Vegas, there was plenty of trouble to be found and Rodriguez managed to locate most of it. Training became an afterthought and soon drugs were a big part of his lifestyle.

Rodriguez lost his title in his next fight, to Miletich Fighting Systems fighter **Tim Sylvia**, and lost twice more before being cut from the UFC. Amazingly enough, Rodriguez never again beat a world-class opponent. As his glory days were further and further in the rearview mirror, his weight ballooned until he was a laughingstock. The former world champion regularly topped 350 pounds.

In 2008, Rodriguez made an effort to get his life under control, if not for himself then for his two children. He appeared on the first season of VH-1's *Celebrity Rehab* and has reportedly maintained his sobriety. Although he has returned to the fight game, it's safe to say that beating drugs was the toughest and most satisfying battle of his life.



Rogan, Joe

Joe Rogan has made a career of exploring the extremes of human behavior. On Tuesday nights he watched people challenge themselves to overcome their



greatest fears (and also eat lots of gross stuff) on NBC's hit reality show *Fear Factor*. One Saturday night a month, he'd also watch men face their fears and pursue excellence in the cage as the longtime color man for the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**.

Rogan, at first glance, seems like a very unlikely choice as the UFC expert in a two-man booth with **Mike Goldberg**. He was a standup comedian best known for his role as Joe Garrelli in the sitcom *NewsRadio*. Could you imagine Carrot Top or Jimmy Kimmel in that position?

A former U.S. tae kwon do champion, Rogan has been studying **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** for more than a decade. He loves MMA, what he calls "developing your human potential." His interest is obvious and infectious. As an announcer, Rogan is absolutely fearless. Sure, he's never fought professionally and mainstream sports have taught fans to expect an ex-pro in the color man's chair. Rogan has defied the odds to excel in his position; it's his passion for the sport that makes it all work.

In Their Own Words: Joe Rogan-isms

Joe Rogan is a fluid and entertaining announcer, but online fans have noticed some phrases or crutches he comes back to again and again. Favorite Rogan-isms:

"He's got heavy hands."

"He's rocked!"

"His jiu-jitsu skills are world-class."

"[Fighter A] is in [Fighter B's] world now."

"He is in deep trouble. That's tight."

Rogan comes back to these phrases early and often. Play the Joe Rogan Drinking Game at your own peril.

Rogers, Brett

Nickname: The Grim

Height: 6'5"

Weight: 265 lbs

Born: 2/17/81

Debut: EFX: Fury (5/3/06)

Career Record: 10-2

Notable Win: Andrei Arlovski (Strikeforce: Lawler vs. Shields)

Notable Losses: Fedor Emelianenko (Strikeforce: Fedor vs. Rogers); Alistair Overeem (Strikeforce: Heavy Artillery)

Just weeks before his **Strikeforce** fight with former **UFC** heavyweight champion **Andrei Arlovski** in June 2009, Brett Rogers was still working in Sam's Club, changing tires. It's been a whirlwind ride for the Minnesotan struggling to put food on the table for his three children while keeping his fighting dream alive.

Rogers, with only a dozen career fights, is relatively inexperienced. But he's been lucky in a way — almost all the formative fights of his career were on national television for either **EliteXC** or **Strikeforce**. Millions of fans have seen him develop, knocking out every single opponent he faced on the national stage. It's his heavy hands that make Rogers a threat to any man he faces. Even the mighty **Fedor Emelianenko**, the greatest fighter in the sport's history, knew better than to take Rogers lightly. "His heavy hitting is a big strength," the Russian said.

And sure enough, Rogers had his moments in their unlikely encounter, cutting the thin-skinned Emelianenko above the nose in the opening exchange, and briefly unloading with some **ground and pound** after a successful sweep from **half guard**. Sure, Fedor ended the fight in the next round with an incredibly powerful overhand right, but by any reasonable standard, Rogers impressed. In his next bout, not so much: **Alistair Overeem**, "Ubereem" version, unceremoniously pounded him out in the first. He might never acquire the all-around skills necessary to be a true top-notch heavyweight contender, but as long as he's in possession of that "heavy hitting" that rightly had Fedor worried, Brett Rogers will remain a dangerous man.

Rua, Mauricio

Nickname: Shogun

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 11/25/81

Debut: Meca World Vale Tudo 7 (11/8/2002)

Career Record: 19-4

Notable Wins: Quinton Jackson (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Antonio Rogerio Nogueira (Pride Total Elimination 2005); Alistair Overeem (Pride Final Conflict 2005, Pride 33); Ricardo Arona (Pride Final Conflict 2005); Kevin Randleman (Pride 32);



Kazuhiro Nakamura (Pride Shockwave 2006); Mark Coleman (UFC 93); Chuck Liddell (UFC 97); Lyoto Machida (UFC 113)

Notable Losses: Renato Sobral (IFC: Global Domination); Mark Coleman (Pride 31); Forrest Griffin (UFC 76)

You could say it's been up and down for the past few years for **Chute Boxe** product Mauricio "Shogun" Rua. In 2005, Rua took his place among the best 205-pound fighters in the world by completely overwhelming his considerable competition in **Pride's** middleweight Grand Prix. By the end of 2006, he was widely if not universally regarded as the sport's top light heavyweight fighter. But after an inglorious 2007 **UFC** debut, he was supposedly washed-up, or worse, exposed as a product of a half-crooked Japanese promotion who couldn't stand up to the rigors of legitimate, drug-tested, unified-rules MMA. Two fights later, he knocked out a legend and became the number one contender to the undefeated **Lyoto Machida's** UFC light heavyweight title. In the world of mixed martial arts, things can change pretty quickly.

A devastating **Muay Thai** striker with a hint of Capoeira flair, Rua lost only once in his first 13 professional fights, caught in a **guillotine choke** by the vastly more experienced **Renato Sobral**. Aside from a freak injury, a broken arm suf-

ferred on a **Mark Coleman** takedown seconds into their first bout, Shogun wouldn't lose again in Pride as he cut a swath through the promotion's deep middleweight (205 pounds) division. When faced with journeymen like **Akira Shoji** or Hiromitsu Kanehara, Rua would stomp or soccer kick them to the point of incapacity within minutes; when he found himself standing across the ring from legitimate title contenders like **Quinton Jackson**, **Ricardo Arona**, or **Alistair Overeem**, the results were much the same. Over the course of his career-defining Pride run, only two fighters managed to go the distance with Shogun: the sure and steady **Antonio Rogerio Nogueira** and the largely inexplicable **Kazuhiro Nakamura**. Those rare Rua fights that went longer than a couple of minutes allowed him to show that he was more than a Muay Thai specialist; he was also a smooth grappler with dangerous **leg locks** and a slick **omoplata**. In the same year that he claimed Pride's middleweight Grand Prix title, Shogun was awarded his **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt after only four years of training.

And so expectations were understandably high when Rua made his UFC debut against fan favorite **Forrest Griffin**. Rua was arguably the best in the world, and Griffin had just followed a surprising knockout loss to the then unheralded **Keith Jardine** with a less than impressive performance against Hector Ramirez in a gimme fight. But Griffin, in a thrilling performance, maybe the best of his career, not only managed to hang with Rua but grind him down, outlast him. An exhausted Rua was forced to tap to a **rear naked choke** with only 15 seconds left in the third and final round.

As stunning as that upset was, it could be explained away in part by Rua's choice to fight on a bad knee less than two weeks after his wedding day. But there was no real accounting for how bad he looked in his next fight. After two major knee surgeries put him out of action for more than a year, Shogun returned to the Octagon to avenge his freak loss to Mark Coleman, a once dominant but broken down fighter coming off an even longer layoff than the Brazilian 17 years his junior. Rua managed to stop Coleman late in the third, but don't be fooled by the UFC's Fight of the Night award: both were exhausted early in what turned out to be a terrible fight. Although he took the win, it was a disastrous showing, perhaps the worst of Rua's career.

But at UFC 97, Shogun put himself right back into the mix at the top of the light heavyweight division with an impressive first round KO of **Chuck Liddell**, attacking with hard leg kicks before landing the left hook to put "The Iceman" on his back. With other top contenders **Rashad Evans** and Quinton Jackson tied up in coaching assignments on *The Ultimate Fighter*, Shogun's win over the fading Liddell was enough to earn him the first shot at Lyoto Machida's light heavyweight title. Although it appeared to most observers that Shogun did

enough to win no less than four of five rounds against the champ, all three judges inexplicably saw it the other way. In their rematch, however, Rua left no room for disagreement, blitzing the champion and laying him out in the first round to claim the UFC light heavyweight title and cement his status among the greatest fighters to compete on either side of the Pacific.

Rua, Murilo

Nickname: Ninja

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 10/22/80

Debut: Meca World Vale Tudo 1 (5/27/00)

Career Record: 19-10-1

Notable Wins: Mario Sperry (Pride 20); Joey Villaseñor (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Baroni)

Notable Losses: Dan Henderson (Pride 17); Ricardo Arona (Pride 23); Quinton Jackson (Pride 29); Paulo Filho (Pride Bushido 10); Robbie Lawlor (EliteXC: Uprising)

Over the course of his career, former **Chute Boxe** mainstay Murilo “Ninja” Rua has stepped into the ring against some of the best middleweights, light heavyweights, and heavyweights in the sport. Unfortunately for **Mauricio Rua**’s older, stylistically similar but less accomplished brother, he hasn’t beaten any of them. After earning a tough win over **Brazilian Top Team** co-founder **Mario Sperry** in **Pride**, Rua dropped decisions to both **Ricardo Arona** and **Paulo Filho** as the rivalry between the two great Brazilian fight teams intensified. An ill-advised jump to heavyweight for **Pride**’s 2004 Grand Prix pitted a plump Rua against then undefeated heavyweight up-and-comer **Sergei Kharitonov**, who tossed Rua around the ring and promptly knocked him out.

The best showing of Rua’s career came in his strange decision loss to **Quinton Jackson** in a 2005 bout so poorly judged that an embarrassed Jackson tried to award his victor’s trophy to Rua in the ring after the fight. Since then, it’s been a steady stream of disappointing performances. Even the lone post-**Pride** bright spot, Rua’s **EliteXC** middleweight championship, was short-lived: less than three months after stopping Joey Villaseñor to win the belt, an exhausted Rua was knocked out in the third round of his first title defense by **Robbie Lawler**. Maybe it was the Chute Boxe name, or maybe it was his own surname, but Murilo Rua was never able to live up to expectations, fair or not.

Ruas, Marco

Nickname: The King of the Streets

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 215 lbs

Born: 1/23/61

Debut: JJ vs. MM (10/31/84)

Career Record: 8-4-2

Notable Win: Gary Goodridge (Pride 2)

Notable Losses: Oleg Taktarov (Ultimate Ultimate 95); Maurice Smith (UFC 21, IFL: Chicago)

Royce Gracie showed the world the power of **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**, **Dan Severn** demonstrated the power of amateur **wrestling**, and at **UFC 7**, Marco Ruas illustrated just how devastating **Muay Thai** kickboxing could be. Before Ruas, it was assumed that only grapplers could succeed at the highest levels of MMA. Ruas and kickboxing star **Maurice Smith** changed those perceptions, one leg kick at a time.

Ruas was a legendary street fighter from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. A **Luta Livre** fighter and a rival to the powerful **Gracie Jiu-jitsu** faction, Ruas was a well-known competitor a decade before the UFC was created. By the time he made his Octagon debut, Ruas was already in his mid-thirties. But a past-his-prime Ruas was more than enough to handle almost anyone the UFC had to throw at him.

He won the UFC 7 tournament by chopping down the “Polar Bear,” **Paul Varelans**. After conditioning his legs by kicking coconut trees over and over again, attacking the fleshy limbs of the gigantic Varelans seemed like child’s play. It was the first time fans and commentators had seen how effective a good Thai attack could be.

Ruas was much more than just a standup striker. He was among the first cross-trained fighters in the sport, combining his stellar kickboxing with a solid ground game. Although Ruas was part of an intense rivalry with the Gracie family, he wasn’t ignorant of the ground game like so many who challenged them. How could he be? He was preparing to beat them.

UFC 7 was the high point of Ruas’s MMA career. He had two horrible fights with **Oleg Taktarov**, dreadfully dull contests that sent fans into a stupor and had promoters pulling their hair out. By the time he made his way to Japan to fight for **Pride**, Ruas was already 37 years old and his body was failing him. He suffered an embarrassing loss to pro wrestler Alexander Otsuka when an anti-inflammatory he was taking for a busted knee made him too lethargic to perform at his best. His knee went out again in his comeback fight against Smith, essentially ending his career as a competitive fighter.

Ruas excelled as a trainer, coaching a new generation of athletes to the top of the sport, most notably former UFC contender **Pedro Rizzo**. Training with Ruas was no walk in the park. Fighters carried Ruas on their back while they ran stairs. He toughened their legs up by whacking them with broomsticks. It might not work for everyone, but fighters knew that when they

stepped into the cage with a Ruas **Vale Tudo** student, you were stepping in with a legitimate tough guy.

Rubber guard: see **Bravo, Eddie**

Rumble on the Rock

Rumble on the Rock was essentially a Hawaiian promotion, like so many others trying to draw a crowd to see the local tough guys go at it. MMA had been big on the islands since the very beginnings of the sport, with T.J. Thompson bringing in plenty of big stars from the mainland for his **SuperBrawl** shows. Rumble on the Rock was a little more relaxed, a show for and starring Hawaiians. At least it was until **B.J. Penn** was available. Then the show exploded into international prominence before things died down again when Penn returned to the **UFC**.

B.J.'s brother J.D. Penn was the president of Rumble on the Rock and excited about the opportunity to build an international brand. The Penns didn't think small and Rumble on the Rock 4 was no exception. They went all out. This was no little show in a high school gym with an old boxing ring. They had their own custom built cage, large screens for the fans to watch the action once it hit the ground, and media coverage that blanketed the island. They also had a dream match: the number one and number two lightweight fighters in the world were set to square off. B.J. Penn, the top fighter in the weight class in America, was taking on the top lightweight in Japan, **Takanori Gomi**.

Penn on that night proved he was in another class, humbling the Japanese star and laying claim to the coveted title of best pound-for-pound fighter in the world. It was a big night and the whole sport was watching. Even UFC President **Dana White** was there to watch the action. This was before **The Ultimate Fighter** put **Zuffa** and the UFC on a different playing field, and Penn wanted more than just the UFC. After winning the welterweight title from **Matt Hughes** at UFC 46, he signed a contract with K-1 to help build their new MMA productions. Penn still wanted to defend the UFC title; he just wanted to earn big paydays in Japan and Hawaii at the same time.

Zuffa had been through this before. **Carlos Newton** had actually signed to fight for Pride when he was still the UFC champion, but lost the title to Hughes at UFC 34 before he was able to journey to Japan as champion. Zuffa didn't want Penn, the welterweight champion, to fight for other promotions. When he announced his intention to fight for K-1, they stripped him of the UFC title. Penn lost the ensuing legal struggle and was out of the UFC.

This opened him up to fight full-time for K-1, which had signed a promotional agreement with Rumble on the Rock. He headlined another show in Hawaii, in a packed Blaisdell Arena, where nearly 9,000 fans saw him dispatch Rodrigo Gracie at Rumble in the Rock 6. It was Penn's last fight for the promotion.

The explosion in pay-per-view business after *The Ultimate Fighter* reignited his interest in the UFC. In 2006 Penn was back, losing two in a row for the first time ever, to welterweights Hughes and **Georges St. Pierre**, before beginning a dominant run in the lightweight class where his career started.

Rumble on the Rock had one final hurrah, a co-promotion with **EliteXC** and former rival Hawaiian promotion Icon Sports. The show featured **Robbie Lawler**, **Nick Diaz**, and **Gina Carano** and was broadcast on Showtime. Future events were in the works when EliteXC collapsed under colossal mismanagement.

Today Rumble on the Rock is right back where it started, developing local talent and putting on small shows for a local audience. That looks to remain the case until B.J. Penn has another falling out with the UFC. Then it's anybody's guess, but a Rumble on the Rock return to prominence is only a signing away.

Rutten, Bas

Nickname: El Guapo

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 220 lbs

Born: 2/24/65

Debut: Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1 (9/21/93)

Career Record: 28-4-1

Notable Wins: Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 2, Pancrase: 1995 Anniversary Show); Frank Shamrock (Pancrase: 1995 Neo-Blood Tournament Round 2, Pancrase: Truth 5); Masakatsu Funaki (Pancrase: 1996 Anniversary Show); Guy Mezger (Pancrase: Truth 2); Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (UFC 18); Kevin Randleman (UFC 20)

Notable Losses: Masakatsu Funaki (Pancrase: Pancrash! 1); Ken Shamrock (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 3, Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 2); Frank Shamrock (Pancrase: King of Pancrase Tournament: Round 1)

If you're new to mixed martial arts, you might only know Bas Rutten as the wacky Dutch co-host of *Inside MMA*, HDNet's weekly round-up of news and notes. If you go back a little further, you might remember him as the longtime color commentator for **Pride**'s English-language broadcasts, extolling the virtues of the liver kick, and offering every grounded fighter the same advice: "He needs to *explode* right here." Or maybe you know him from his truly insane self-defense video, *Bas Rutten's Lethal Street Fighting*, clips of which can and must be seen on YouTube. Immediately.

But if you've been with the sport since the very beginning, or close to it, you know Bas Rutten as a King of **Pancrase** and the **UFC's** fourth heavyweight champion. A Dutch kickboxer who soaked up the submission game like a sponge once he came to Japan, Rutten learned from his early Pancrase losses to grapplers **Masakatsu Funaki** and **Ken** and **Frank Shamrock**, and was never caught in a finishing hold again. In fact, after his March, 1995, loss by **knee bar** to Ken Shamrock, Rutten never lost again, period. He remained undefeated in his final 19 Pancrase bouts, earning championship titles and combining with Masakatsu Funaki to put on what is widely regarded as the finest match in the organization's history. Funaki was as dangerous as ever on the ground, and almost finished the fight in the early going when he secured a heel hook and twisted Rutten's leg to a shockingly unnatural angle. "I can still not believe that I escaped that situation," Rutten reflected a decade later. The canny Rutten escaped, though, and over the course of a 17-minute classic, battered the courageous Funaki with a seemingly endless barrage of kicks, elbows, and the open-handed palm strikes synonymous with Pancrase.

Rutten's winning ways followed him to the UFC, where he was immediately thrust into the heavyweight title picture. A dramatic knockout win in a back-and-forth battle against the always tough **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka** earned Rutten a date with **Kevin Randleman** to crown a new heavyweight champion after **Randy Couture** vacated the title. Rutten, famously unable to defend the takedown, spent much of the fight beneath the powerful wrestler, but was awarded the match in a decision still hotly debated by fans more than a decade later.

That was the last time we'd see Rutten in action for years. After dealing with Randleman's power, Rutten wisely decided to move down a weight division, but a string of serious training injuries forced his retirement in 1999. He transitioned into acting and broadcasting, worked the occasional **professional wrestling** match, and published a series of instructional books and DVDs, including the impressively comprehensive *Bas Rutten's Big Book of Combat* in addition to his aforementioned masterpiece, *Lethal Street Fighting*.

It wasn't until 2006 that Rutten would fight again, taking on the professional opponent Ruben "Warpath" Villareal after **Kimo Leopoldo** failed a pre-fight **steroid** test. Rutten pounded Warpath with leg kicks and stopped him in the first round, but was in such rough shape from the rigors of training that he was unable to perform his trademark split-legged jump to celebrate the win. There can be little doubt now that Rutten has indeed fought for the last time, but he remains a much loved fixture on the mixed martial arts scene



all the same with his infectious enthusiasm, goofy charm, and vast knowledge of the sport.

In Their Own Words: Bas Rutten on how Ken Shamrock inspired him to be great

"It was the loss against Ken. I really had it. I'm a very sore loser and I knew what the problem was. It was because I didn't train any ground. That decided it for me. Forget about striking, nobody's going to strike with me anyway, even **Maurice Smith** took me down in a fight. So I start concentrating on grappling two times a day, seven days a week. I really took it to the next level in training. I always told Ken, 'Thank you for that, buddy, because that actually made me very good.' I never lost again."



Sakuraba, Kazushi

Nicknames: Saku, The Gracie Hunter, The IQ Wrestler

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 183 lbs

Born: 7/14/69

Debut: Shoot Boxing S Cup 1996 (7/14/96)

Career Record: 26-13-1 (2 No Contests)

Notable Wins: Marcus Silveira (UFC 15.5); Carlos Newton (Pride 3); Vitor Belfort (Pride 5); Royler Gracie (Pride 8); Royce Gracie (Pride 2000 Grand Prix Finals); Renzo Gracie (Pride 10); Ryan Gracie (Pride 12); Quinton Jackson (Pride 15); Kevin Randleman (Pride Final Conflict 2003); Ken Shamrock (Pride 30)

Notable Losses: Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 2000 Grand Prix Finals); Wanderlei Silva (Pride 13, Pride 17, Pride Total Elimination 2003); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Shockwave 2002); Antonio Schembri (Pride 25); Antonio Rogerio Nogueira (Pride Shockwave 2003); Ricardo Arona (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Kiyoshi Tamura (Dynamite!! 2008)

The once-great Kazushi Sakuraba has spent so much of his career as just that — the *once-great* Kazushi Sakuraba — that it's easy to lose sight of his singular place in the history of mixed martial arts. Every time he takes another lopsided beating, every time he squeaks by some trivial opponent by the narrowest of margins, the images of Sakuraba doing the impossible against the best in the world are pushed a little farther back in the mind. We used to approach every new Sakuraba bout with a sense of anticipation, a feeling that we were about to see things we'd never seen before and might never see again. But that anticipation has turned to dread, a sense that each new battle brings the much loved Sakuraba not just closer to retirement, but ever nearer to real, lasting harm. And it's been this way for years.

Sakuraba's long road began with his decision to enter the world of **professional wrestling** after his amateur days at Chuo University, where he had captained the **wrestling** team. He joined the red-hot UWFi, a shoot-style organization that did its best to present the most realistic-looking grappling contests possible while still scripting the outcomes. Sakuraba slowly worked his way up the card, but by the



time he made it to the top, the business was collapsing around him: Sakuraba's first headlining match came on the promotion's final show. He maintained his main event status in **Nobuhiko Takada's** Kingdom Pro Wrestling after the demise of the UWFi, but the Japanese public's appetite for extremely realistic professional wrestling dwindled as their exposure to legitimate mixed martial arts increased. When Takada stepped into the ring to face **Rickson Gracie** in a legitimate contest at the inaugural **Pride** event, it was clear that an era was coming to a close.

It was the best thing that could have happened to Kazushi Sakuraba. With a style informed by professional wrestling's spirit of showmanship and the **catch wrestling** he studied under the legendary Billy Robinson in his UWFi days, Sakuraba became Pride's top draw, and, for a time, a legitimate national sports hero.

His beginnings in mixed martial arts had been humble enough, with a submission loss to **Kimo Leopoldo** by **arm triangle** at the 1996 Shoot Boxing S Cup in a bout that many maintain was less a legitimate fight than an extension of Sakuraba's professional wrestling career. We can be a little surer of the legitimacy of his appearance in the heavyweight tournament at **UFC Japan**, but it was thoroughly weird all the same. First of all, there's the matter of Sakuraba's weight, which couldn't have been anywhere near the 203 pounds he listed in order to compete as a heavyweight. Then, there was the first-round debacle against **Marcus Silveira**. Minutes in, Sakuraba was under fire and dropped low to attempt an ankle pick takedown. Referee **John McCarthy** immediately stopped the fight under the mistaken impression that Sakuraba had been knocked out. Sakuraba didn't take it well, to say the least, and protested immediately. After some back-room deliberations, it was ruled that Sakuraba could re-enter the tour-

nament in place of the injured **Tank Abbott**, and faced Silveira a second time, quickly winning by **arm bar** and announcing, “In fact, pro wrestling is strong.”

The relative ease with which he put away Silveira, a black belt under **Carlson Gracie**, meant Sakuraba’s submission skills were for real. But no one could have anticipated all that followed. In his Pride debut, he put away journeyman **Vernon White** with an arm bar after what seemed like an eternity. It was nothing special. His next bout, against Canadian grappler **Carlos Newton**, on the other hand, most definitely was. In a fluid, back-and-forth grappling clinic that still stands as one of the greatest ground battles in MMA history more than a decade later, Sakuraba emerged the victor when he found his way to a **knee bar** midway through the second ten-minute round. Then came the Brazilians: a draw against Allan Goes, and wins over **Vitor Belfort** and Ebenezer Fontes Braga. The Japanese fans were eager to see their wrestling heroes hold their own against the Brazilian **Vale Tudo** fighters who had thus far bested them, and Sakuraba gave them just what they were looking for. Sakuraba was succeeding where his stablemate Takada had famously failed.

A series of matches against the legendary Gracie family took Sakuraba from a promising up-and-comer to the pinnacle of his sport over the course of just 13 months. First, there was **Royler**, the smallest but most technically proficient of the Gracie clan. Sakuraba punished him with leg kicks throughout their match, and trapped Royler in a trademark **Kimura** with less than two minutes to go. With Royler’s arm contorted at an unnatural angle, the referee stepped in and controversially ended the bout against the Gracies’ wishes. They protested passionately, insisting they’d been cheated. When Sakuraba met **Royce** in the second round of the Pride 2000 Grand Prix, it was under rules modified to deal with the Gracie family’s concerns: there would be no time limits and no referee stoppages. But the hotly anticipated meeting between Japan’s top native star and the hero of the UFC’s first tournaments almost didn’t happen. It took an absolute gift of a judges’ decision to keep Sakuraba alive after an indifferent showing against Pancrase veteran **Guy Mezger**.

With that taken care of, however unjustly, the stage was set for an unforgettable classic. Every serious MMA fan needs to see Sakuraba’s 90-minute battle against Royce Gracie at least once. Not because of any particularly spectacular exchanges, not because of any sudden, dramatic twists or turns, but simply because of the sheer madness of a 90-minute mixed martial arts contest. Sakuraba came close to finishing early with a knee bar, and Gracie had his chance with a **guillotine choke**, but it was Sakuraba’s leg kicks that would once again prove the difference over the long haul, forcing Gracie’s corner to throw in the towel rather than watch their fighter take any more

abuse. As if Sakuraba hadn't given the ecstatic Tokyo Dome crowd enough, he came back later that night to face **Igor Vovchanchyn**, the most feared heavy-weight striker on the planet. Sakuraba somehow managed to hold his own against the stout Ukrainian despite weighing in at only a scant 173 pounds that night — and despite having already fought for *an hour and a half* against Royce Gracie. Sakuraba's corner wisely stopped the Vovchanchyn bout after the first round. Their man had nothing more to prove.

This is the Kazushi Sakuraba we want to remember: the best show in all of mixed martial arts, equal parts peerless submission grappler and brilliant physical comedian. The one who paid tribute to his pro wrestling heroes with elaborate ring entrances, delivered exaggerated “Mongolian” chops, cartwheeled around the **guard**, and dragged his butt-flopping **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** opponents around the ring by their ankles. The one who could hit match-ending submissions from seemingly any position against any fighter, regardless of size or skill. There was no one like *that* Kazushi Sakuraba before, and there's been no one like him since.

The point of inflection might have been Sakuraba's bout against the game **Renzo Gracie** at Pride 10. An almost perfectly even contest ended abruptly with less than a minute remaining in the second ten-minute round, when Sakuraba seized Gracie's arm in a Kimura grip and spun to the ground. The arm was broken, the match was over, and the two great fighters embraced. Although Sakuraba would later defeat **Ryan Gracie**, and rumors of a showdown with Rickson Gracie would persist for years, his victory over Renzo was truly the culmination of Sakuraba's rivalry with the Gracie family, a rivalry that elevated both Sakuraba and the sport itself to unprecedented levels of popularity in Japan.

In the many years since, however, it's been a long way down. There were the three devastating losses to **Wanderlei Silva**, and the broken orbital bone suffered in a senseless but strangely compelling bout against **Mirko Cro Cop** that helped fill Tokyo National Stadium. Those losses were dispiriting, but there could be no shame in losing to bigger, stronger, ferocious strikers. The real turning point, the first definitive sign that Kazushi Sakuraba wasn't what he used to be, came in a loss to the otherwise completely unremarkable Antonio Schembri, who found no real success in the sport beyond his first-round knockout of the Japanese legend. Sakuraba avenged the loss a year later, but it seemed like too little, too late. We couldn't fool ourselves any longer. Kazushi Sakuraba hadn't just lost a step — he was washed-up.

As if to hammer that point home, Sakuraba was ludicrously booked in a 2005 middleweight Grand Prix bout against the powerful young **Ricardo Arona**, who beat Sakuraba beyond recognition. Since then, Sakuraba has been handled

with kid gloves, treated to fights against beatable opposition rather than the sport's elite. There was a flash knockout over **Ken Shamrock**, a grappling duel with the entertaining but ineffectual **Ikuhisa Minowa**, and, as the tears poured out from behind Sakuraba's Tiger Mask getup, a shocking departure from the dying Pride to longtime rival K-1. As part of **Hero's**, and later **Dream**, Sakuraba's fights alternated between winnable matches against newcomers to the sport and a kind of MMA legends circuit. It's unclear what a win over **Masakatsu Funaki** means in 2007, or a loss to **Kiyoshi Tamura** in 2008. But at least they're relatively safe outings for a man who has already been hospitalized once for restricted blood flow to his brain, no doubt the result of years of brutal in-ring punishment.

Sakuraba's last bout of real significance came on New Year's Eve 2006 against rising star **Yoshihiro Akiyama**. Try as he might, Sakuraba was unable to secure a grip on the **judo** player, and complained loudly to the referee both during and after the fight that something wasn't right. As it turned out, Akiyama had illegally greased his body to avoid the great grappler's take-downs. The revelation that he had cheated one of mixed martial arts' great legends — perhaps its greatest legend — was nothing short of scandalous. In the world of professional wrestling that gave Sakuraba his start and formed his sensibility, this was a heel turn, one that manipulated the audience's love for the fading hero into hatred for the villain who tried to cheat him, and rocketed the newly loathed Akiyama to top-draw status. Sakuraba was rightly furious: there was no question he'd been wronged, and he couldn't be expected to see any upside to what had transpired. But seen in a certain light, it was a fitting end — of relevance, at least — for the man who once fought to prove that “in fact, pro wrestling is strong.”

Sakurai, Hayato

Nickname: Mach

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 168 lbs

Born: 8/24/75

Debut: Shooto: Let's Get Lost (10/4/96)

Career Record: 35-11-2

Notable Wins: Caol Uno (Shooto: Let's Get Lost); Frank Trigg (Shooto: R.E.A.D. Final); Shinya Aoki (Shooto: Alive Road, Dream 8); Jens Pulver (Pride Bushido 9); Joachim Hansen (Pride Bushido 9)

Notable Losses: Anderson Silva (Shooto: To the Top 7); Matt Hughes (UFC 36); Jake Shields (Shooto: Year End Show 2002); Dave Menne (Deep 10th Impact); Takanori Gomi (Pride Shockwave 2005); Nick Diaz (Dream 14)

When Hayato Sakurai was at his best — like the 20-fight undefeated run that opened his career, or his road to **Pride's** lightweight tournament final — he

could do it all. From any position, in any situation, he was dangerous. Whether hanging back and landing those punishing leg kicks, or clinching up to deliver knees to the body or launch into a huge hip throw, Sakurai was always more than most could handle on their feet. And once the fight got to the ground, his opponents had to contend with a man who finished second in the open-weight absolute category in the 1999 **ADCC** submission **wrestling** championship — as a welterweight.

For a recent example of the breadth of what Sakurai had to offer as a fighter, look no farther than his 2007 Pride bout against *The Ultimate Fighter* season six winner **Mac Danzig**. No, Danzig was never quite first-tier competition, skilled and tough as he is, and by 2007 Sakurai was a little past his prime, but if you want to see the full range of technique, if you want to see it all in one place, it's all here. Sakurai lands heavy, straight punches to the body, short hooks on his way into and out of the clinch, **Muay Thai** knees, a spinning back fist, cringe-inducing leg kicks, huge ippon seoi-nage and o-goshi **judo** throws, and a near **arm bar** submission. And that's just the first round. In the second, Sakurai bullied Danzig with left hook, right leg kick combos before knocking him out with a spectacular, whirling overhand right.

This was nothing new to Sakurai, who'd been doing much the same to all comers for more than a decade before he outclassed Mac Danzig. He first stepped into the ring in 1996 against another debuting future **Shooto** legend, **Caol Uno**. Sakurai beat Uno with an arm bar in the first round, and never looked back. It would be five years, 20 fights, and seven successful defenses of his 168-pound Shooto title before Sakurai first tasted defeat, dropping a unanimous decision to **Anderson Silva**. Sakurai followed his loss to the man who would become the **UFC**'s greatest middleweight champion with a dream match against the **UFC**'s most accomplished welterweight champion, **Matt Hughes**. Hughes, in his first defense of the welterweight title he'd claimed with a controversial win over **Carlos Newton**, was at the height of his powers, and stopped Sakurai in the fourth.

For years, it looked as though that was the end of Hayato Sakurai as a top contender. He seemed unable to get back on track after a serious car accident between the title loss to Silva and the title challenge to Hughes. Maybe it was the crash, maybe not, but for whatever reason, Sakurai went from one of the most consistent fighters in the game to an unpredictable mess in the ring. The unshakeable calmness that characterized him at his best drifted into something closer to indifference. He dropped fights to Gracies you've probably never heard of, and even in victory fell short of the "Mach" we'd come to expect.

But he found new life on a new stage: Pride Fighting Championship's Bushido series. In an effort to finally crown a Japanese champion, Pride put together a 160-pound lightweight tournament built around their dynamic, heavy-handed star, **Takanori Gomi**. Although Gomi was clearly the centerpiece, the eight-man tournament was stacked with legitimate lightweight contenders, like **Yves Edwards**, **Chute Boxe**'s Luiz Azeredo, the UFC's first lightweight champion **Jens Pulver**, and former Shooto champs **Joachim Hansen** and **Tatsuya Kawajiri**. Sakurai advanced to the New Year's Eve finals on the strength of two impressive wins on the same night, a first round knockout of Pulver and a beautiful back-and-forth battle with Joachim Hansen in the best fight on one of the best cards in MMA history.

Sakurai fell short in the championship final. He opened strong against the dangerous Gomi, but after attempting a hip throw too close to the ring ropes, Sakurai was caught badly out of position, and the opportunistic Gomi pounded him out before he could regroup. Still, the 2005 Bushido tournament marked the return of the Sakurai everyone hoped to see again, the Sakurai who could do it all.

Now well into his thirties, Sakurai has settled into a role just below title contention. Although he still drops the occasional bout you'd never expect him to (David Baron? *Really?*), he can still surprise you in the other direction too. Was anyone counting on him picking up a second career win over top lightweight **Shinya Aoki**? The organizers of the **Dream** welterweight tournament who matched them up in the first round probably had other ideas. But while Sakurai might not be championship material any longer, he brings more than enough to the table to be one hell of a spoiler.

Salaverry, Ivan

Height: 6'

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 1/11/71

Debut: PPKA: Wenatchee (8/22/99)

Career Record: 12-7

Notable Wins: Andrei Semenov (UFC 37); Tony Fryklund (UFC 50); Joe Riggs (UFC 52)

Notable Losses: Akihiro Gono (Shooto: To the Top 1); Matt Lindland (UFC 39); Nate Marquardt (*Ultimate Fight Night* 1)

Ivan Salaverry was a dynamic fighter, but one damned by history to be remembered more for his biggest failure than his many successes. In 2005 the **UFC** had finally realized **Dana White**'s dream: his own version of boxing's old *Tuesday Night Fights*, a live fight program to showcase his UFC talent to a large cable television audience on Spike TV. This was an opportunity to help

In Their Own Words: Ivan Salaverry on Rooster Budo and his cockfighting tattoo

"Over here [in Chile], it's in somebody's ranch and there's a bunch of guys surrounding a cage. There, they have auditoriums where they have cockfighting. A whole scene people get into. You have the older gentlemen in the front rows betting. You have a young crowd. You have music playing. It's just a different culture. And if you ever see a fighting cock, the gymnastic level these little guys have is incredible. I've seen them get cut up and still go.

"I'm not even really a proponent of cockfighting, but what I saw made an impression. I'll give you an example. There was this one cockfight. One of the cocks was jabbing down on the other, and basically was winning. The injured cock's beak is about to hit the sand, and once the beak hits the sand, you lose. This cock was pecking, pecking away at him. And then the other cock jumps up, and whoom, cuts his head off. It was this beautiful jump, and the blade hit just the right place, and the head comes off. The crowd went wild. Both cocks died, but the winner, the one who beheaded the other, they lifted him up and they walked around with him. And the crowd just loved it, went crazy. Adored that chicken! After that I was like, wow.

"That's the one thing that I can tell you about it is that I want people to love me in that capacity. You know what I mean? When you're out there in a cage and you fight hard you want to know the people are loving you for what you brought to them. It stuck with me. This is the kind of spirit I would like to have."

Interview by Tommy Hackett, Total-MMA.com

establish not just stars for future pay-per-view bouts, but to establish for a new audience just what ultimate fighting was all about. The main event needed to provide a mix of action-packed fighting on the ground and on the feet. And Ivan Salaverry was entrusted with that responsibility.

Salaverry was exciting. His last two UFC wins had come by way of submission, both ending in the first round. After the fights he would do a cartwheel or blow a kiss to the crowd. His opponent was **Nate Marquardt**, another exciting and multi-faceted fighter the UFC had high hopes for. Instead of fireworks, the crowd was treated to one of the worst fights of all time. The fight was so bad that Salaverry was let go from his UFC contract. It was a tough call for the UFC. Salaverry was very popular personally with almost everyone in the industry. But the only thing worse than losing a fight is losing one of the most boring fights ever.

His career never recovered from the *Fight Night* debacle, but Salaverry continues to stay active in the business, training fighters at his Seattle gym.

Sambo

For most fans of mixed martial arts, sambo is the grappling art most closely associated with names like **Fedor Emelianenko**, **Andrei Arlovski**, **Sergei Kharitonov**, or, for those who have been watching since the sport's earliest days, **Oleg Taktarov**. Understandably, few would recognize the names Vasily Sergeevich Oshchepkov or Viktor Afanasievich Spiridonov. But these are the two most important names of all, the founding fathers of the discipline.

Vasily Oshchepkov grew up an orphan in the Pacific port city Vladivostok. Supported by a local charity, Oshchepkov attended Vladivostok's Tokyo Christian school, where he was first exposed to **judo**. Oshchepkov earned his black belt, founded a club of his own, and, in 1917, invited a Japanese team to Vladivostok to compete against his own students in one of the earliest instances of international competition in the sport. Oshchepkov, who had visited Japan twice to grade as a young man, maintained close ties with the country throughout his professional life, and worked in Tokyo for several years as a military interpreter — or, if Russian judo expert Andrew Moshanov is correct, as an intelligence agent. All the while, Oshchepkov kept up his studies at the Kodokan, and became a proficient second-degree black belt in the art.

In 1923, Oshchepkov was charged with the task of improving upon the Red Army's existing self-defense program. He was joined by Viktor Spiridonov, a veteran of the Russo-Japanese War whom Russian statesman and sportsman Vladimir Putin describes as “a top expert in applied military gymnastics, a strong and nimble man who quickly appreciated jujitsu's merits.” Judo historian Mark Law offers this outline of their efforts:

In a programme of “creative sessions” at four main sports centers in Moscow, including the Red Army's Central Club, [Oshchepkov and Spiridonov] brought together people from all over the USSR to meet in a succession of exploratory confrontations. The techniques of the Tajiks were assessed against those of the Khazaks; Georgians, who never fought on the ground, were pitted against Turkmen; Uzbek throws were tested against the pickups and leg grabs of the Azerbaijanis.

The sambo (literally “self-defense without weapons”) that emerged from this crucible was at first confined to the Spetsnaz Soviet special forces, but later spread to the population at large under sport rules similar to those of

judo, but with several important differences, beginning with the uniform. The red or blue jackets, called *kurtka*, are worn tighter than the *judogi*, shorts take the place of **gi** pants, and competitors take to the mat in **wrestling** shoes rather than bare feet. **Leg locks** are prominent, strangulations are banned, and throws are only scored if the attacker manages to stay on his feet. Less restrictive gripping regulations — reminiscent of judo rules in the 1920s, when sambo began to take shape — lead to a variety of throws executed while holding the belt. Those differences aside, there is an enormous amount of crossover between the techniques and strategies of both sports.

And between competitors, too: with judo's inclusion in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the Soviets combed their sambo ranks to identify those who might flourish under the closely related rules of modern competitive judo. Top Soviet sambo players and top Soviet judo players were one and the same. The uniquely Soviet judo that grew out of Oschepkov and Spiridonov's sambo was characterized by the leg grabs and pickups of the traditional wrestling styles of the Soviet lands, expert **arm bars** executed from all angles, and an athleticism that brought a quickened pace to the sport. The Soviets enjoyed immediate and lasting success, and Russia remains a robust judo power to this day.

Oschepkov, however, didn't live long enough to see the fruits of his labor. His close ties with Japan, which formed the basis of his life's work, would ultimately prove to be his undoing as Stalin's distrust of all things foreign deepened throughout the 1930s. As one of the millions undone by The Great Purge of 1937, Oschepkov was arrested under accusations of espionage and died soon after his imprisonment at the age of 44. His name was effectively wiped out of the official history of the martial art he fathered, as was the word "judo" for many years — both were tainted by their association with a foreign power, and had no place in the Republics.

Sambo today is practiced around the world, though its organizational structure beyond Russia and its former satellites is loose at best. In addition to the grappling-sport sambo described above, there exists a more obscure variant known as combat sambo, which allows chokes and a variety of strikes in addition to the throws, leg locks, and arm locks permissible under sport sambo. Combat sambo thus closely resembles a jacketed version of MMA, and indeed heavyweight MMA legend Fedor Emelianenko is a four-time world champion in the sport. It should be noted, however, just how minor a sport combat sambo is at present: en route to his 2007 world championship, two of Emelianenko's opponents failed to even show up, which is inconceivable in any truly credible world-class event. The grappling-only sport sambo,

though perhaps of less immediate interest to fans of mixed martial arts, is vastly more competitive than its more rugged offshoot.

Sanchez, Diego

Nickname: Nightmare

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 155-170 lbs

Born: 12/31/81

Debut: Ring of Fire 5 (5/21/02)

Career Record: 21-4

Notable Wins: Kenny Florian (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1 Finale); Nick Diaz (*The Ultimate Fighter* 2 Finale); Karo Parisyan (UFC Fight Night 6); Clay Guida (*The Ultimate Fighter* 9 Finale)

Notable Losses: Josh Koscheck (UFC 69); Jon Fitch (UFC 76); B.J. Penn (UFC 107)

Fans first learned Diego Sanchez was a little different during the first season of *The Ultimate Fighter*. While others drank and made mischief, Sanchez explained some of his interesting philosophies to the world. Sanchez was incredibly intense, a devotee of self-help guru Tony Robbins, but also a bit of a mystic. He warmed up outside in the rain, convinced the storm brought him energy, and practiced yoga in the sauna to cut weight. Of all the fighters in that first season, none wanted it more than Sanchez. He dominated the competition, including future **UFC** stalwarts **Chris Leben**, **Kenny Florian**, and **Josh Koscheck**, on his way to winning the six-figure contract.

In the **UFC** proper, Sanchez looked better than ever before. His skills were solid, but nothing was better than good: he was a good striker, a good grappler, and a good wrestler. But he wasn't great at anything. What separated Sanchez from the pack was his insatiable desire. He simply went out and fought harder than his opponent. It was a virtual guarantee that Sanchez would go full-out for 15 minutes. Not many fighters could match his pace, and he took advantage of opponents who tired.

On his way to what seemed an inevitable title shot, Sanchez beat some of the **UFC**'s very best welterweights, including **Nick Diaz** and **Karo Parisyan**, in fights that were among the best ever in the Octagon. Many of his fights main evented Spike television specials and he became one of the **UFC**'s most recognizable fighters. Yet a title shot eluded him.

He had momentum on his side and with his television notoriety, he seemed a likely candidate to face the legendary **Matt Hughes**. Then he ran into a roadblock constructed by "Crazy" Bob Cook and the American Kickboxing Academy. Sanchez lost an atypical fight with former *Ultimate Fighter* teammate Josh Koscheck, who made huge strides expanding his repertoire at **AKA**. The two men had been friendly on the show, but in ensuing years had

developed into bitter rivals. Koscheck got into Sanchez's head and Diego was so afraid of his opponent's takedown prowess that he refused to engage. It was later revealed that Sanchez had been ill and had a staph infection, explaining why the usually swarming Sanchez offensive attack was replaced with a defensive shell. Sanchez lost for the first time in his professional career, a bitter pill to have to swallow during a difficult time.

After spending his entire career with trainer **Greg Jackson** in New Mexico, Sanchez was moving on. Jackson had brought in **Georges St. Pierre**, a former champion, to train with his all-star team. Sanchez saw this as a sign that Jackson didn't think Sanchez would ever be a champion; after all, if St. Pierre were to become champion again, Jackson would never allow Diego to fight a teammate.

Leaving his friends and family for the first time, Sanchez relocated to California, where he trained with legendary jiu-jitsu instructor Saulo Ribeiro. His first fight outside the Jackson family was a bitter disappointment. He lost to Koscheck's ATT teammate **Jon Fitch**, a victim of Fitch's superior size more than his superior techniques.

In Their Own Words: Diego Sanchez on getting down to 155 pounds

"Man, I've been an experiment. I've been a human science experiment since the day that I got in this game. I started supplementing when I was a junior in high school, the Rip Fuel. Name it, man. I've been addicted to ephedrine. I've done creatine and O2s. I've done it all. And then the nutrition part, really, started to excel for me. You know when I was on *The Ultimate Fighter*, man, I was eating a box of Rice Krispies every night. I used to eat meat because I heard that fighters should eat meat, red meat, and I'd eat red meat super-well done, like a piece of rubber.

"But then I actually hired Rob Garcia, Oscar de la Hoya's strength and conditioning and nutritionist coach. And he coached me for two and a half years, taught me how to cook, taught me a lot of stuff. You know I used to be on a big-time brown rice, egg whites, a lot of spinach, healthy fats like olive oil, and that diet was good for me at 170 but I had to make some adjustments to dropping to 155. I had to cut more fats out. Cut more carbs out. It's really hard. I don't know, man, right now my calories, I'm probably maybe at about 1,100. So yes, my meals are real small and real precise."

Eventually, Sanchez bowed to pressure and moved down a weight class to lightweight. It was an immediate success. Sanchez had always been smaller than his opponents at 170 pounds. Now he was like-sized and just as dangerous. He beat top contenders **Joe Stevenson** and **Clay Guida**, not only securing important wins, but also earning Fight of the Night honors. The old Sanchez was back, and at 155 pounds, seemed likely to earn the title shot he never managed to secure at welterweight.

Santos, Cristiane

Nickname: Cyborg

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 145 lbs

Born: 7/9/85

Debut: Show Fight 2 (5/17/05)

Career Record: 10-1

Notable Wins: Shanya Baszler (EliteXC: Unfinished Business); Hitomi Akano (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Diaz); Gina Carano (Strikeforce: Carano vs. Cyborg)

Notable Loss: Erica Paes (Show Fight 2)

As you would expect from a woman nicknamed “Cyborg,” Cris Santos is like a machine — one that goes in a single direction: forward. She plows ahead methodically, stalking her victims across the cage, waiting for the moment to unleash the kind of fury rarely seen in women’s mma.

Like many Brazilian MMA fighters, Santos was born in Curitiba. Like many champions, including **Wanderlei Silva**, **Mauricio Rua**, and **Anderson Silva**, her devastating attack was honed in the gyms of Rafael Cordeiro. The head of **Chute Boxe** saw her compete in a high school handball tournament. One year later, she was making her MMA debut.

Santos uses her strength advantage to push her opponents into the cage and wear them down with a constant barrage of strikes. She has yet to meet her physical equal, having run over a series of overmatched opponents. Some opponents were simply not good enough to beat her. Others, like Japanese submission star Hitomi Akano, were tremendously outsized, in Akano’s case a disadvantage compounded by Santos missing the contracted weight by almost six pounds.

EliteXC and, when they went out of business, **Strikeforce** almost immediately saw what they had in Santos. She was the perfect foil for the face of women’s MMA, **Gina Carano**. The two were polar opposites. Carano was centerfold pretty and a media darling. Santos looked like exactly what she was: a female body builder.

It was a compelling contrast and in 2009 the two women became the first female fighters to headline a major MMA card in America. More than 13,500 fans packed the HP Pavilion in San Jose, California, to cheer on Carano.

There wasn't much to celebrate though; Cyborg overwhelmed the fan favorite to become the first Strikeforce women's champion.

Sapp, Bob

Nickname: The Beast

Height: 6'5"

Weight: 350 lbs

Born: 9/22/72

Debut: Pride 20 (4/28/02)

Career Record: 11-6-1

Notable Wins: Kiyoshi Tamura (Pride 20); Yoshiro Takayama (Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2002)

Notable Losses: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Shockwave); Kazayuki Fujita (K-1 MMA Romanex)

Bob Sapp is a ridiculously large man. There have been plenty of big men in the world of MMA, some even bigger than Sapp. But no one had ever packed quite so much muscle onto quite so large a frame. Sapp wasn't just 350 pounds — he was a ripped and cut 350 pounds. Before he found fighting, Sapp struggled to find a use for his amazing genetics. After failing in football and failing in **professional wrestling**, the former Washington Husky was moving furniture and preparing for a life of manual labor. Then he was discovered by the Japanese promotion K-1 and his life would never be the same.



Sapp's success story is one you hear often, but it's normally attached to teen idols like the Jonas Brothers or Britney Spears. Sapp became more than a fighter in Japan. He is a cultural icon. The combination of his unusual size and bigger-than-life personality resonated with fans in Japan. He exploded onto the scene at the same time the sport was reaching the peak of its popularity. Sapp became the face of MMA in Japan. His fights set ratings records on network television. Sapp's fight with sumo star **Akebono** in 2003 attracted 54 million fans. He also starred on talk shows and pitched products from washing machines to televisions.

Sapp is unusual, because he peaked in the first year of his fighting career. In an amazing eight-month run in 2002, Sapp came close to defeating the world's best heavyweight MMA fighter **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**. He used a pro wrestling-style powerbomb to rattle Nogueira, but the champion had too much heart to lose. He secured an **arm bar** when Sapp got tired. It was an epic fight and Sapp's ascension to the top of the sport would soon follow.

Just a month later he beat the world's best kickboxer, Ernesto Hoost. Then he beat him again. Using his size to bully the smaller champion, Sapp looked nearly unbeatable, but the eight fights in eight months may have been too much. He's never been the same. As the outside distractions mounted, Sapp's

In Their Own Words: Bob Sapp on racism

"I get asked about the banana thing and everything else. Bottom line is the 'Beast' not only had bananas, I had raw meat and all kinds of crazy stuff going on. It wasn't anything that had to do with racism. What happens, and this is very common, we in America assume that the rest of the world has all our same views. Sometimes I've been criticized for my Panasonic commercial, they say, 'You look like a pimp.' I start laughing and say, 'That's not the way the Japanese are going to look at it.' That's how Americans look at it. They don't have pimps over here, they have mama-sans. It's a female, the mama, who is in charge of the prostitutes. Not a male. Not a pimp. So they had no idea. But it's very common that it happens.

"They aren't in the streets hollering negro this, nigger this, they're out there saying, 'Bob Sapp, Bob Sapp' and everyone is going nuts. Would you say it's racism because I've also got the number one selling women's sex toy in Japan? The Bob Sapp Wild Sapp Dildo. The closest thing that compares to it is a horse. I don't think it has anything to do with a gorilla. I think what's occurring is that things are going so well people say, 'Why don't we knock him down a peg?'"

training time and devotion to being a great fighter waned. He struggled with ordinary fighters like **Kimo Leopoldo** and **Seth Petruzelli** and lost to terrible fighters like Jan Nortje. Seven years after his stunning debut, the idea of Sapp beating a world champion is laughable.

Today he is a familiar face to fans worldwide, guaranteed to get a fight card some extra media attention. What he's not is a champion. Sapp loves the limelight, but he doesn't love fighting. It's just something he does in between television appearances — just another of his many engagements.

Sato, Rumina

Nickname: Tsukiokami ("Moon Wolf")

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 143 lbs

Born: 12/29/73

Debut: Shooto: Vale Tudo Access 2 (11/7/94)

Career Record: 20-14-2

Notable Wins: John Lewis (Vale Tudo Japan 97); Charles Diaz (Shooto: Devilock Fighters); Yves Edwards (SuperBrawl 17); Bao Quach (Shooto Hawaii: Soljah Fight Night)

Notable Losses: Joel Gerson (Shooto: Las Grand Viajes 2); Caol Uno (Shooto: 10th Anniversary Event, Shooto: R.E.A.D. Final); Takanori Gomi (Shooto: To the Top Final Act); Joachim Hansen (Shooto: 2003 3/18 in Korakuen Hall); Takeshi Inoue (Shooto: Tradition Final)

Had he been born a little later, had he began his mixed martial arts career when lightweight fighters were front and center in Japan, submission ace Rumina Sato could have been a star. Instead, he'll be remembered as a cult hero only by the small but devoted **Shooto** audience that has stuck by his side during a 15-year (and counting) odyssey that has seen Sato come up just short of championship gold time and time again.

Sato burst onto the professional Shooto circuit in 1994, and captured the imagination of the Shooto faithful with the extraordinary range of his submission fighting skills. It's not just that he was finishing people, and finishing them early — it's that he was finishing them with calf slicers and flying reverse **triangle chokes** in addition to your garden variety **arm bars**, **Kimuras**, **rear naked chokes**, and **heel hooks**. In the early years, only the tough **John Lewis** gave him any trouble, and probably got the better of Sato in a match that went the distance at **Vale Tudo Japan** 1996. But without judges to render a decision, the match was declared a draw, and Sato ultimately ran his unbeaten streak to a dozen bouts with a decisive arm bar win over Lewis a year later.

Then came Canadian Joel Gerson, whom few outside of Ontario **judo** and jiu-jitsu circles, or Moni Aizik's Samurai Club in Richmond Hill (the same

In Their Own Words: UFC star Joe Lauzon on Rumina Sato's influence

"Sato was one of my favorite guys to watch. He is probably to blame for me being so reckless with submissions. I used to watch his highlight reels all day long. I learned so many things just from watching highlight videos. Crazy, low percentage, off the wall moves. But he'd just go for it. And that's influenced what I do so much. That guy never had a boring fight. Maybe he didn't win every fight, but he was always worth watching. He might not submit someone, but the possibility is always there. It's like a **Chuck Liddell** fight. He's got all that power in his right hand and the knockout can come anytime. So, you watch."

gym that turned out **Carlos Newton**), had every really heard of. In a stunning upset, Gerson threw Sato at will, and handed him his first career loss when he applied a picture-perfect arm bar late in the first round. "Commentators in the first row stood, their mouths open in utter disbelief," Toronto sports reporter Beverly Smith wrote in the *Globe and Mail*. "One woman looked as if she wanted to cry."

Many of Sato's best moments were yet to come, like a dazzling, six-second win by flying arm bar over Charles Taylor, and an all-time classic battle with **Caol Uno** at Shooto's 10th Anniversary Event, his first bid for championship gold. But it was never quite the same after that first loss. Sato vowed that he would not leave the organization before he'd earned a Shooto world title, and the short version of the Rumina Sato story is that more than a decade later, he's still there. His most recent title challenge came against Takeshi Inoue in commemoration of Shooto's 20th anniversary — and fittingly, Sato came up short. It was hardly a surprise: Sato hadn't won since 2007, and hasn't finished anyone by way of submission since 2004. But the much-loved Shooto stalwart soldiers on, no longer as a legitimate title contender but as the visible soul of the organization he's always called home.

Schrijber, Bob

Nickname: Dirty Bob

Height: 6'

Weight: 235 lbs

Born: 3/3/65

Debut: CFT 1 (1/1/95)

Career Record: 20-17-1

Notable Wins: Gilbert Yvel (IMA: Knockout Power); Hugo Duarte (2H2H 1); Ian Freeman (It's Showtime: Christmas Edition); Melvin Manhoef (2H2H 6)

Notable Losses: Gilbert Yvel (Rings Holland: The Final Challenge); Daijiro Matsui (Pride 7); Heath Herring (World Vale Tudo Championship 9); Wanderlei Silva (Pride Grand Prix 2000); Semmy Schilt (It's Showtime: Exclusive); Gary Goodridge (2H2H 2); Igor Vovchanchyn (It's Showtime: Amsterdam Arena 2003); Melvin Manhoef (It's Showtime: Amsterdam Arena 2005)

At the pre-fight rules conference before **Pride 7**, the camera panned to catch Holland's Bob Schrijber listening intently. He need not have bothered. The next night, during his fight with **Daijiro Matsui**, Schrijber was disqualified. He illegally held the ropes, while illegally stomping Matsui with illegal blows to the back of the head, all after the bell to end the first round had rung. Matsui learned the hard way why they call him "Dirty Bob."

Make no mistake: Schrijber was a dirty fighter, but he was also dangerous. He was a bouncer who had been in hundreds of street fights. His kickboxing matched up with anyone in the world. He knocked out two of the best strikers in the sport, **Gilbert Yvel** and **Melvin Manhoef**, and went toe-to-toe with **Igor Vovchanchyn** and **Wanderlei Silva** before the veterans took the easy way out, taking it to the mat and tapping Schrijber out. For all of his standing prowess, the ground remains Schrijber's Achilles heel. Ten of his 17 losses came by way of submission.

Dirty Bob was also one of the fight game's great showmen. During his 2000 fight with fellow Dutchman Semmy Schilt, Schrijber brought a ladder into the ring so he could look the seven-foot Schilt in the eye during the introductions. The rest was vintage Schrijber. He took a horrific beating from the better fighter, but he refused to quit. Eventually it was a submission hold that ended his night.

Today, Schrijber doesn't just train fighters like **UFC** veteran Stefan Struve. He's also been a referee for several MMA fights in Europe. After all, if anyone knows how to spot a dirty fighter, it's Bob Schrijber.

Semaphore Entertainment Group (SEG)

Semaphore Entertainment Group (SEG) was struggling before the **Ultimate Fighting Championship** became an overnight success in September 1993. The pay-per-view industry was still in its formative years, and SEG was among a handful of companies trying to find a product Americans were willing to watch at a premium. SEG had tried everything: concerts with bands like Iron Maiden, a comedy show with a past-his-prime Andrew Dice Clay, even a kid's show with the developers of Thomas the Tank Engine. Nothing stood out. It seemed America was only willing to pay for three things: **boxing**, **professional**

wrestling, and porn. With that in mind, SEG executive Campbell McLaren began searching for visceral entertainment along those lines, programming that would feel like a slap in the face. McLaren was considering green-lighting a demolition derby or Mexican professional wrestling when a proposal for “War of the Worlds” came across his desk.

McLaren immediately took the idea to his boss, former radio maverick Bob Meyrowitz. **Rorion Gracie**, ad-man **Art Davie**, and Hollywood heavyweight John Milius had the inkling of an idea that could be refined into something special. The proposal was for a multi-show tournament to crown the “World’s Hand-to-Hand Combat Champion.” Bouts would be contested in a pit with Greek columns and statues surrounding it, a nod to the original Olympic pankration. That wouldn’t work, the producers agreed, but neither would a simple boxing ring. Gracie was adamant that a ring could not contain a real fight. Soon, ideas were flying around fast and furious, including fighters surrounded by a moat filled with piranhas and fights enclosed by a Plexiglas cage. In the end, a Hollywood set designer created the now-famous Octagon.

The UFC was a huge hit from the very beginning, drawing an unbelievable 86,000 pay-per-view buys with no television or media support. The event included an eight-man tournament for a prize of \$50,000, won by Rorion’s brother **Royce Gracie** with relative ease, including a victory over future hall of famer **Ken Shamrock** in the semi-finals. On their first attempt, SEG had struck gold, finding two stars in Shamrock and Gracie, both compelling and memorable characters.

The second event was expected to feature a rematch between the two, a match that was postponed when Shamrock broke his arm training with **Vernon White**. After the first show ran short, matchmaker Art Davie booked a whopping 16 men for the second one-night tournament. The prize money was bumped to \$60,000. The extra \$10,000 may have come from money saved on expenses — the fighters and their entourages were housed in a scary hotel normally occupied by hookers and drug dealers. Gracie survived four men, and the hotel, to win his second tournament. The most notable addition to the UFC crew was referee “Big” **John McCarthy**. McCarthy was the third man in the cage, but not empowered to stop the fights. He insisted on that authority going forward and became as recognizable as any fighter and a powerful behind-the-scenes influence.

UFC 3 was a disaster, albeit an entertaining one that ended up making the promotion more popular than ever. The UFC was counting on Shamrock and Gracie finally meeting, even creating a poster that featured the two in an intense staredown. Still thinking they could control the outcome, promoters put

the two men in opposite brackets, figuring a meeting in the finals would be more dramatic than a first-round encounter. **Kimo Leopoldo**, a street fighter turned missionary from Hawaii, was more than happy to play the role of spoiler. Kimo came to the cage carrying a giant cross on his back. He had enough strength afterwards to take the fight to Gracie, battering him badly before finally falling victim to an **arm bar**. An exhausted Gracie couldn't return and an injured Shamrock didn't have the spirit to continue on against anyone but Gracie. The finals featured the mulleted **Harold Howard** taking on alternate **Steve Jennum**. Jennum, facing competition for the first time in the finals, took home the title of Ultimate Fighting Champion, the first non-Gracie to do so.

The pro wrestling-esque spectacle of the third event made the promotion bigger than ever. At UFC 4, they more than doubled the pay-per-view sales of their first event and sold out the arena in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Unfortunately, the backlash had begun. Senator John McCain sent a letter to the Oklahoma Attorney General and tried to get the event canceled. Pressure was also placed on pay-per-view carriers, but the event was selling well enough that they refused to give in. **Dan Severn** made his MMA debut, but only after another competitor bowed out after an injury. Severn had failed to impress match-maker Art Davie, but wowed the world with two amazing back suplexes on an out-sized Anthony Macias. Severn advanced to the finals to take on Gracie, and controlled him for 15 minutes before succumbing to a **triangle choke**. It was an amazing finish, but one most around the country didn't see. The UFC had been allotted just two hours for their show. When the Severn/Gracie match went past that mark, it was cut off in thousands of homes nationwide. The UFC's most dramatic come-from-behind victory went unseen by the masses, and what should have been their biggest payday to date was lost when cable companies refunded millions to unhappy customers.

By UFC 5, SEG had learned their lesson. Shamrock and Gracie were removed from the tournament altogether, instead clashing in the UFC's first Superfight. Fans were anticipating something epic; instead, Shamrock and Gracie turned in the worst performances in MMA history. Neither was willing to engage and the fight was a 36-minute dud. Luckily Severn returned to liven things up in a dominant performance, winning three bouts in just nine minutes on his way to the tournament championship. The event was the last for Rorion and Royce Gracie. Unhappy with new time limits, in place to prevent another UFC 4 disaster, Gracie and Art Davie sold their share of the UFC to Bob Meyrowitz. It was the end of an era.

It was also the high point for business under SEG. More than 260,000 homes bought the event on pay-per-view, a record that stood well into the

Zuffa era. The UFC had captured an audience, but couldn't out-fight John McCain. At every event McCain placed incredible pressure on local politicians. The UFC hoped to escape mounting political pressure in the continental United States with UFC 8, but inadvertently walked into a minefield in Puerto Rico. McCain continued to attack the event, encouraging the Puerto Rican government to ban the show. His ally across the aisle, Democrat Joe Lieberman from Connecticut, successfully lobbied pay-per-view giant Cablevision to pull the show from their network. A negative piece on ABC's *20/20* did little to help. The UFC's David Isaacs was in court just the day before the event when he finally secured permission for the show to go on. Inside the cage, it was SEG executive Campbell McLaren's finest moment. He had loved the **Keith Hackney**/Emmanuel Yarborough fight from UFC 3, a battle between a small **karate** man and a gargantuan sumo, and devised a "David versus Goliath" format for the UFC 8 tournament. It was a tremendous success, as former collegiate wrestler **Don Frye** won a thrilling eight-man contest. In the main event, Ken Shamrock successfully defended his title over Kimo Leopoldo, locking in a **knee bar** and making the big Hawaiian tap out.

Things went from bad to worse at UFC 9 as enemies mounted. The American Medical Association may have been against boxing and mixed martial arts, but they sure weren't afraid to kick the UFC while it was down. The group's president, Lonnie Bristow, issued a scathing indictment of "human cockfighting," and continuing pressure from McCain and other advocates of media censorship nearly saw the event canceled. The fiercest battle of the day was in court where a judge allowed the event to continue, but with two important rule changes: no head butts and no closed-fist punches to the head. The UFC devised a perfect work-around; punches were technically illegal, but the punishment would be a fine of just \$50. The main event was the worst fight in UFC history, a 30-minute dance between Severn and Shamrock. Shamrock had almost decided not to fight at all. He saw himself as a role model and didn't want to knowingly break the law. He also feared pre-fight injuries, including a broken nose and injured ribs, would slow him down. Pressure from Isaacs, Bob Meyrowitz, and his father, Bob Shamrock, convinced him to show up — he didn't do much fighting, but he at least went into the Octagon. Before the event, pay-per-view outlets in Canada decided not to carry the UFC. Since Canada accounted for up to a quarter of the UFC's pay-per-view income on some shows, this was another major blow to the company's bottom line. The ship, it seemed, was sinking.

By UFC 12 it was clear that McCain had won. This show was a logistics triumph for Isaacs. At the last minute, the UFC had to move the show from

Niagara Falls, New York, to Dothan, Alabama. The New York legislature, despite approving the sport overwhelmingly, backtracked after negative press in the *New York Times*. Because state law didn't allow the legislature to change the law so quickly, the athletic commission came up with a new set of rules to govern no-holds-barred fighting. New rules would require a gigantic 40-foot cage, mandate headgear, and allow no submission holds. With just three days to comply with these ridiculous new restrictions, the UFC was confident it would win the legal battle — they had won everywhere else. Shockingly, the New York courts sided with the government. The UFC chartered two planes to carry everyone and everything associated with the event (even the Octagon itself) to Alabama. Dog-tired fighters arrived at the hotel at 5 a.m. The promoters and television crew didn't have that luxury. They went to the Waffle House, loaded up on coffee, and got ready to set up a live pay-per-view event, something that usually took days, in just hours. It was another costly night for the UFC. The move cost more than a quarter of

In Their Own Words: SEG Vice President David Isaacs on SEG's role in creating the UFC fans see today

"I think Dana White has done a lot of really good things. I really, really do. But I also think he's kind of propagated this myth of the old UFC — that we had no rules, we were outlaws and not trying to get it regulated, and that they changed so many things. Eh. You know I hired **Joe Silva**. What's he doing now? John McCarthy we hired through Rorion. **Joe Rogan**, Campbell found. **Mike Goldberg**? I found. The producer? I found. The director? I found. Dana is telling a story that isn't entirely true based on the facts, but I think it's a good story for the media. This is the new UFC. The mainstream press doesn't understand it so they are looking for the headline version. Human cockfighting was that headline. Today it's 'Fastest Growing Sport in the World.' That's the story. They just don't have the time or the interest to really understand the details. We got into this because we thought there was something there that was very compelling. We as a company had been looking for new types of programming for pay-per-view but as we fought through this we just thought we were right. It was safer than boxing. And we had the facts to prove it. It was a struggle, but we did believe at the end of the day that the truth and the work and the money we're putting into it would win out. But for a couple of things that happened, I think we would have been there. "

a million dollars and there was no paid attendance. With no time to advertise or sell tickets, the seats were given away to locals and to soldiers from nearby Fort Rucker. Amazingly, the event went off without a hitch. **Mark Coleman** wrecked Dan Severn to become the UFC champion and young Brazilian **Vitor Belfort** announced his presence as a future contender by dropping Scott Ferrozzo in the finals of a heavyweight tournament. **Lion's Den** standout **Jerry Bohlander** won the lightweight tournament for fighters under 200 pounds. Since there were no actual weigh-ins, the fighters just had to appear to be less than 200 pounds. The UFC had a long way to go to become a big league promotion. Soon after the show TCI Cable, Time Warner, and most cable providers dropped UFC pay-per-views. Senator McCain, the new chair of the powerful Commerce Committee, looked like he had finally won his long battle with cage fighting.

The UFC under SEG continued on, promoting events mostly in the deep south, waiting for the day that the sport would find its way back onto pay-per-view television and back in some of the country's major markets. Considerable effort went into cleaning up a reputation that they themselves had played a major part in slandering. Once, SEG was proud to play up the chance of a death in the Octagon, happy to tell the world they were banned across America. Now they were adding weight classes and creating their own rules under the guiding hand of former Olympic gold medalist **Jeff Blatnick**. Bob Meyrowitz was sure that the UFC was still an event that Americans would support and get behind and he held out hope for as long as he could. In 2000, after failing to see the sport approved by the powerful Nevada State Athletic Commission, Meyrowitz and SEG began looking to sell the UFC. Matchmaker **John Perretti** found funding and many within SEG were terrified the unpopular Perretti would be their new boss. Instead, Meyrowitz sold the show to the billionaire **Fertitta brothers** and their partner **Dana White**.

Sengoku Raiden Championships: see **World Victory Road: Sengoku**

Serra, Matt

Nickname: The Terra

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 6/2/74

Debut: VATV 3 (4/1/98)

Career Record: 11-6

Notable Wins: Yves Edwards (UFC 33); Jeff Curran (UFC 46); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 69)

Notable Losses: Shonie Carter (UFC 31); B.J. Penn (UFC 39); Karo Parisyan (UFC 53); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 83); Matt Hughes (UFC 98)



“It’s crazy,” a slightly agitated Matt Serra told Setanta Sports as his second bout against **Georges St. Pierre** drew near. “Last year may have been an upset but, believe me, it was no fluke. What is a ‘lucky punch’? Who do these people think I was trying to punch in the face if not Georges? Seriously, you tell me, if you aim at something, and then hit it time and time again, was it

luck or did you just do what you were trying to do?” Serra definitely had a point. But how else to make sense of an eleven-to-one underdog overwhelming the young champion who everyone agreed was the future of the sport? How did a journeyman like Serra even find himself standing across the cage from St. Pierre, a man who looked like he was not just in another league, but of a different species?

Dana White likes to say that *The Ultimate Fighter* (TUF) reality series can change lives, and Matt Serra is a prime example of that possibility. The fourth season of *The Ultimate Fighter* was billed as The Comeback, an opportunity for fighters who had already enjoyed an opportunity in the **UFC**, but had either crashed out or drifted away, to get back to that level of competition. Serra, an experienced and accomplished **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** stylist and **ADCC** medalist who had split his eight UFC fights, was probably best known to UFC fans as the fighter on the wrong end of **Shonie Carter**’s amazing spinning back-fist KO. His other UFC losses had come by tough, hard-fought decisions against opponents who ranged from good (**Din Thomas**, **Karo Parisyan**) to great (**B.J. Penn**), but that one big win had always eluded him.

But TUF tournament wins over Pete Spratt, Shonie Carter, and Chris Lytle earned Serra — who had fought most of his career at lightweight — a welterweight title shot. The first shot, in fact, was at new champion Georges St. Pierre, who demolished the great **Matt Hughes** to take the title. Much has been made of Serra’s big right hand, the “lucky punch” that caught St. Pierre behind the ear and sent him staggering three minutes into the fight, but not enough has been said about the impressive body work that set it up. Changing levels, throwing hard shots to the body, and getting out of harm’s way against a fighter with a six-inch reach advantage — that looked an awful lot like sound, well-executed strategy. Once Serra had the champ hurt, he was relentless, and forced GSP to tap to strikes from the **mount** at 3:25 of the first round.

To say that Matt Serra never again equaled that moment is true, but hardly the point. How do you top perhaps the greatest upset in MMA history? In his second bout with St. Pierre, Serra was taken down and dominated for the better part of two lopsided rounds before the referee stepped in. A year later, Serra dropped a long delayed and ultimately anticlimactic grudge match against Matt Hughes, almost certainly ending Serra’s run at or near the top of the card. There can be no doubt, though, that Serra realized his potential, and got the most out of his unimposing physique. Asked about performance enhancing drugs in the sport, the stocky Serra once answered, “Dude, if you test me, I’ll test positive for marinara sauce. That’s about it.” Given the stand-out coaching and cornering he showed on *The Ultimate Fighter*, and his two

successful Brazilian Jiu-jitsu academies in New York, it would surprise no one to someday see Serra cageside, convincing a new generation of fighters that “small hammer fists are fine.”

Severn, Dan

Nickname: The Beast

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 250 lbs

Born: 6/8/58

Debut: UFC 4 (12/16/94)

Career Record: 93-16-7

Notable Wins: Oleg Taktarov (UFC 5, Ultimate Ultimate 95); Tank Abbott (Ultimate Ultimate 95); Ken Shamrock (UFC 9); Paul Buentello (USWF 6); Marcus Silveira (WEF 9); Wes Sims (RSF 2); Forrest Griffin (RSF 5)

Notable Losses: Royce Gracie (UFC 4); Ken Shamrock (UFC 6); Mark Coleman (UFC 12); Josh Barnett (SuperBrawl 16); Pedro Rizzo (UFC 27)

Dan Severn started his MMA career as an object lesson. In his late thirties, sporting a wicked mustache and extra baggy black trunks, Severn looked like he had been transported from a 1920s magazine ad for athletic equipment directly to the Octagon. He was a big wrestler, a legitimate amateur who had qualified for the 1980 Olympic team. To a man like **Royce Gracie**, Severn was something else entirely: he was prey.

With just four days of training, Severn came into **UFC 4** with no submission experience, no striking experience, and no chance. He just didn't know it yet. If he had been a killing machine like **Mark Coleman** was to be, it might have been a different story. But Severn was just a little too cerebral, even perhaps a little too decent, to do what it took to defeat Gracie. Instead, the smaller man wrapped his legs around Severn's head and neck and squeezed. If Severn was like announcer **Jeff Blatnick**, a fellow amateur star and a 1984 Olympic gold medalist, he probably thought it was nothing . . . until he saw black and had to tap out. Severn had fallen victim to a **triangle choke** and MMA had just had its first classic fight.

The Severn that returned for **UFC 5** was a different man. A pro wrestler, he had developed a persona that he thought would fit this new sport. Dan Severn was no longer. In his place was “The Beast.” The new Severn was much more aggressive, winning three fights in just nine minutes on his way to the tournament championship.

He wanted a rematch with Gracie, but Royce had fought his final bout in the UFC on that same show. His brother **Rorion Gracie** sold his share of the company to **Semaphore Entertainment Group** and he and Royce departed the group with their heads held high. Instead, Severn would be matched up against the super-

popular **Ken Shamrock**. Although Shamrock had yet to win an important UFC fight, he was a crowd favorite. His muscular sculpted frame made him stand out and fans had been trained by movies and **pro wrestling** to associate large muscles with toughness. Severn and Shamrock were both pro wrestlers and were able to bring a little pizzazz to the UFC's drab pre-fight presentation. They had a spat at the press conference and fans were buzzing. The UFC had their first grudge match, which Shamrock won in the first round with a **guillotine choke**.

Severn would get his rematch, but first he would have to run the gauntlet of some of the best fighters in UFC history. The event was called The Ultimate Ultimate, and Severn conquered a field that included **Oleg Taktarov**, **Tank Abbott**, and **Marco Ruas**. It was the most stacked tournament MMA had ever seen and Severn had to fight for almost 50 minutes to win the \$150,000 purse.

The Shamrock rematch at UFC 9 in Detroit, Michigan, was one of the very worst fights, worst sporting events, and worst entertainment experiences in world history. The UFC was under intense political pressure and a court banned closed fist strikes for the bout. The result was a timid affair, 30 minutes of staring at each other and about one minute of actual fighting. The fans turned on both men, even the home state favorite Severn, booing the fighters and chanting, "Let's go Red Wings." Even referee "Big" **John McCarthy** got into the act, imploring them to get busy. Severn won a decision that neither man deserved.

It was the last win of Severn's UFC career. His next bout was against fellow wrestler Mark Coleman, a bigger and better version of Severn himself. Coleman was younger, more aggressive, and a strong favorite. He demolished Severn in the first round to become the first UFC heavyweight champion.

Severn had eight fights on the independent circuit before getting another shot

In Their Own Words: SEG executive Campbell McLaren on Dan Severn

"I brought Dan in because he had legitimate credentials and would start to make us look like a real organization. Dan is a real wrestler, but he's not a real fighter. And there's a difference. Dan couldn't end a fight; he wasn't a puncher. Dan is a very nice man, but he reminds me of the horses on the Budweiser commercial. The Clydesdales? They can pull a wagon but they're not going to win any races. Everyone wanted him to be better and wanted to see what would happen next time. No one went, 'Bullshit, I'm never watching this again.' We still were presenting a more interesting thing than anyone else had."

in the UFC. He was unpopular with the UFC brass, who saw him as a boring wrestler, but the promotion needed his star power. Ken Shamrock and **Don Frye** had both left for professional wrestling and the UFC needed a popular name to challenge new champion **Maurice Smith**. Then Severn made a decision that would cost him. Just one week before UFC 15, Severn fought on the first **Pride** card in Japan. He beat **Kimo Leopoldo** in another horrible fight, but was banged up enough over the course of 30 minutes that he was in no shape to fight for the UFC. Tank Abbott filled in at the last minute, famously getting up off the bar stool to step into the Octagon, and Severn was blacklisted. He didn't make another appearance in the UFC for more than three years.

Realistically Severn was done as a meaningful MMA fighter. As he entered his forties, Severn just wasn't able to compete with the very best inside the cage. But his strong wrestling and ring experience served him well against dozens and dozens of young fighters around the world. Severn fought anyone he could, as often as he could. Along the way he's lost to rising prospects like **Josh Barnett** and come out ahead against future champions like **Forrest Griffin**.

Severn continues to fight, even as he enters his sixth decade on the planet. While **Randy Couture** gets all the attention as MMA's honorary old man, Severn grinds away, looking for that landmark 100th win. As amazing as his early exploits were, his success well into middle age may be the greatest achievement of Severn's athletic career.

Shamrock, Frank

Nickname: The Legend

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 185-205 lbs

Born: 12/8/72

Debut: Pancrase: King of Pancrase Tournament (12/16/94)

Career Record: 23-10-2

Notable Wins: Bas Rutten (Pancrase: King of Pancrase Tournament); Masakatsu Funaki (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 6); Enson Inoue (Vale Tudo Japan 97); Kevin Jackson (UFC 15.5); Igor Zinoviev (UFC 16); Jeremy Horn (UFC 17); Tito Ortiz (UFC 22); Phil Baroni (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Baroni)

Notable Losses: Masakatsu Funaki (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 2); Bas Rutten (Pancrase: 1995 Neo-Blood Tournament, Pancrase: Truth 5); John Lober (SuperBrawl 3); Renzo Gracie (EliteXC: Destiny); Cung Le (Strikeforce: Shamrock vs. Le)

When Frank Juarez stepped out of prison, his first stop was **Ken Shamrock's** gym. The infamous **Lion's Den** was like a little military camp, filled with clean-cut fighters with short hair and an all-American look. Into their midst came Frank, a long-haired scrapper who, like Ken, came from Bob Shamrock's

Boys' Ranch. He took a horrible beating. Everyone wanted to be the one to initiate the cocky new guy, but Ken wanted to do it himself. If Frank was going to train with his team, he was going to earn it.

From those humble beginnings sprang forth the world's top fighter. Frank Shamrock was the very best fighter of his generation. Starting with his adopted brother Ken in Japan, Frank was the first **Pancrase** fighter to successfully adapt his technical grappling style to life inside the unforgiving cage. Before he could become the sport's best, however, Shamrock had to leave behind the only family he had ever known. He had to blow up a system that seemed to be working in order to develop one that could take him to unknown heights.

Shamrock was an amazingly fast learner. From the beginning of his fighting career he was able to hang with the best grapplers on the planet. He got a little help along the way. Ken was Pancrase's biggest foreign star. His good-looking "brother," a young fighter with serious potential, was carefully protected. Pancrase stars **Masakatsu Funaki** and **Minoru Suzuki** were both former pro wrestlers. They understood the value of building new stars and both men were willing to help Shamrock's career by taking it easy on him in early fights.

By 1996, Shamrock was thriving. He won the interim King of Pancrase title in a fight with Suzuki before losing it to his rival **Bas Rutten**. Rutten had started as a neophyte grappler and lost early fights to both Shamrock brothers. He continued to develop though, adding strong grappling to his amazing standup. Soon he had pushed past the Lion's Den fighters to become the best technical fighter in the promotion.

After losing twice to Rutten, and then losing a brutal fight to John Lober in Hawaii, Frank started questioning the way he had been preparing for his fights. Some of the problems he saw were easy to fix, like the fact he was smoking and drinking in Japan before the fights. Other problems were larger in scope. **Maurice Smith**, a professional kickboxer who came to the Den to work on his grappling skill, was appalled by the way they went about business. Guys were sparring bare-knuckle and there was no focus on cardiovascular conditioning at all; it was a primitive approach.

When Ken Shamrock left MMA for the wild world of **professional wrestling**, Frank took an opportunity to change some of the ways the Den operated. Ken was not used to being challenged. He was the leader, no questions asked, and Frank was supposed to follow direction. After a frenzied argument, that included Ken throwing a computer monitor at Frank, there was no turning back. Frank Shamrock was on his own.

Together with Maurice Smith and Japanese judoka **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka** (TK),

Shamrock created the Alliance. The three men exchanged techniques and strategy with unprecedented honesty. Instead of just “getting in there and scrapping” — the traditional instruction in the Lion’s Den — Shamrock was learning to fight on his feet and to develop his body to its maximum potential. His first fight with Smith and TK in his corner was an amazing battle with **Enson Inoue** at **Vale Tudo** Japan 1997. Shamrock showed off his newly improved standup by knocking out Inoue with a knee to the jaw. There was almost a second fight that evening, when Inoue’s brother Egan charged the ring to tackle Shamrock.

Order was restored and the win propelled Shamrock into a match for the first **UFC** middleweight (now called light heavyweight) title against former Olympic gold medalist Kevin Jackson. Fourteen seconds into the fight, Jackson was tapping and a new star was born. A subsequent 22-second win over Igor Zinoviev saw Shamrock effortlessly slam the **Extreme Fighting** standout to the mat, ending his evening and his career with a broken collarbone.

The two dominant wins over top fighters made him an immediate star. His win over **Tito Ortiz** at UFC 22 made him a legend. Ortiz had run through two of Frank’s former Lion’s Den teammates, **Jerry Bohlander** and **Guy Mezger**, and had an intense shouting match with Ken. Even though Frank had left the Den years earlier, the UFC played the event up as Frank getting revenge for his friends and family. Backstage while preparing for a photo shoot, Frank and Tito shared a laugh while the UFC prepared to advertise their fight as a blood feud.

It was an epic fight, one of the very best in the UFC’s history. Ortiz outweighed Shamrock by close to 30 pounds and dominated the early going. But Shamrock’s intense focus on conditioning paid off. He survived the best Tito had to offer, and when Ortiz tired, Shamrock pounced. At the end of the fourth round, Ortiz could take no more. Shamrock had conquered his greatest foe and after the fight announced his retirement in the Octagon.

The UFC was nearing bankruptcy and owner **Bob Meyrowitz** was honest with Frank: he simply could not afford to pay him what they had agreed to. Shamrock actually had to take a pay cut to fight Ortiz. Not willing to risk his health or his reputation for paltry paydays, Shamrock left the UFC behind him. Leaving martial arts behind wasn’t so easy.

After fighting twice for K-1 in Japan, and after an aborted 2003 comeback, Shamrock was back as a full-time fighter in 2006. He had stayed involved in the sport, as an announcer and a trainer, keeping his name out there with a new generation of fans. More importantly, he had carefully studied successful promotional techniques. When he came back for **Strikeforce** and **EliteXC**, he was ready to make money, for himself and the promoters he

worked with. The new Frank Shamrock wasn't nearly as good in the cage, but he was much better at selling the Frank Shamrock brand. Every Shamrock fight, no matter the opponent, became an entertaining war of words. He beat journeyman **Phil Baroni** and an inexperienced Cesar Gracie, but looked badly out of his depth against **Renzo Gracie** and **Nick Diaz**.

The best fight of Shamrock's third act was a titanic struggle with san shou (and movie) star **Cung Le**. The two were the most popular fighters in their hometown of San Jose, California, and the crowd was on edge for the entire fight. Shamrock chose to stand and exchange with Le, landing the more solid punches, but also falling victim to several unorthodox kicks. One kick broke Shamrock's forearm. Although he finished the third round, the fight was called and Le became the Strikeforce middleweight champion. It was one of the best fights of 2008, and proof that while Shamrock may no longer be a great fighter, he is still an entertaining one.

Shamrock, Ken

Nickname: The World's Most Dangerous Man

Height: 6'

Weight: 205-220 lbs

Born: 2/11/64

Debut: Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1 (9/21/93)

Career Record: 27-13-2

Notable Wins: Masakatsu Funaki (Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1); Bas Rutten (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 3, Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 2); Dan Severn (UFC 6); Kimo Leopoldo (UFC 8, UFC 48)

Notable Losses: Royce Gracie (UFC 1); Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 4); Dan Severn (UFC 9); Don Frye (Pride 19); Tito Ortiz (UFC 40, UFC 61, UFC: The Final Chapter); Rich Franklin (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1 Finale); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 30)

It was one of the most memorable moments in **UFC** history. After a dull as dirt fight between **Tito Ortiz** and **Guy Mezger**, Ken Shamrock took it upon himself to liven things up. Still in the midst of his **pro wrestling** run in the **WWE**, Shamrock brought a little pro wrestling flavor into the Octagon. The crowd, the announcers, fellow fighters — everyone was loving it. As Ortiz celebrated in the cage, putting on an obscene T-shirt and shooting the bird towards Shamrock and his corner, the “World's Most Dangerous Man” flipped out. Hanging over the cage, yelling and pointing, Shamrock looked deadly serious as he told Ortiz, “Tito, don't let me catch you wearing that T-shirt.”

It was pure Ken Shamrock. Some of it was no doubt for show, but enough of the hysteries were real to make the situation seem a little dangerous. UFC officials were scared to death that Ken and Tito would soon be fighting

backstage. It was a compelling moment, one that helped make the struggle between Ortiz and Shamrock's **Lion's Den** the most successful blood feud in UFC history. This is what Ken Shamrock brought to the Octagon. What he lacked in skill, he more than made up for in charisma and the ability to sell a fight. It's why Shamrock, despite a pedestrian 7–6–2 record in the UFC, is still the biggest star in MMA history.

Ken Wayne Shamrock has been at the forefront of the sport since the very beginning. He won the main event at the very first **Pancrase** card in Japan, beating his mentor **Masakatsu Funaki** with an **arm triangle**, and also wowed fans with his muscular physique and submission skills at the very first UFC a month later. Even though he lost to eventual champion **Royce Gracie** in the semi-finals, Shamrock still came out of the event looking like a million bucks.

Ken Shamrock's story is the story of MMA. Like the sport itself, Shamrock started strong. He won the King of Pancrase title in Japan and was the UFC's first Superfight champion, beating **Dan Severn** at UFC 6. As the UFC took fire from politicians and cable companies, Shamrock himself was criticized for a series of boring performances. Thirty minute-plus deadly draws at UFC 5 with Royce Gracie and UFC 7 with **Oleg Taktarov** earned Shamrock a reputation as a cautious and dull fighter. His performance at UFC 9, now affectionately called the "Dance in Detroit," confirmed it. Shamrock and Severn refused to engage at all, as the crowd booed and chanted, "Let's go Red Wings."

And then, the UFC disappeared from public view, banned in many states and pulled from pay-per-view. Shamrock left for greener pastures, returning to his original career in professional wrestling. Unlike fellow UFC stars, like Severn and **Tank Abbott**, who followed Shamrock into big-time American wrestling, the World's Most Dangerous Man thrived in the WWE ring. His charisma and ability to work a crowd translated into wrestling, although his lack of in-ring presence seemed to hold him back from reaching the very top.

While Shamrock excelled professionally, his personal life and relationship with his MMA team, the Lion's Den, was falling apart. The wrestling lifestyle, tiresome hours on the road, and rampant drug abuse were wearing on him. His adopted brother **Frank Shamrock** left the team and the former home of champions was struggling in the ring.

It was time for Shamrock himself to return, to set things right. It's no coincidence that Shamrock's MMA homecoming happened as the sport was taking off in Japan. Shamrock was a true professional, fighting for money, and the money was in Japan's **Pride**.

Shamrock's MMA second act was a mixed bag. His skills actually looked better than ever. While he had always been a super submission artist, he



had worked hard to add a respectable standup game to his arsenal. He beat up Japanese pro wrestler Alexander Otsuka on his feet and then dominated **Kazayuki Fujita**, fresh off a win over megastar **Mark Kerr**, until things got weird. Still in the first round, Shamrock seemed to suddenly tire. He called to his cornerman **Pete Williams**, “**Petey, my heart!**” The fight was soon stopped, and despite an impressive performance, Shamrock walked away as the loser.

The final fight on his Pride contract was the shining moment of Shamrock’s career. He and fellow pro wrestling refugee **Don Frye** were asked to help promote their Pride 19 fight in America, hoping to challenge the UFC’s dominance of the pay-per-view market. What followed was one of the greatest feuds in MMA history. Sometimes this kind of verbal sparring, highlighted by Frye’s below the belt attacks on Shamrock’s personal struggles, ends with a timid fight. Not this time. These two MMA pioneers gave all they had. Despite crippling Frye with his devastating **leg locks**, Shamrock ended up on the losing end of a split decision. Even in defeat, Shamrock had proven to Frye and his other critics that he was still a great fighter and on any given night was capable of amazing things.

While Shamrock was in Pride, the MMA landscape changed right under his nose. The UFC, his original home, had been sold to the mega-rich **Fertitta brothers** and was now being run by the ultra-aggressive **Dana White**. White and the new UFC were willing to commit the resources to finally bring fans the fight they had been craving for three and a half years: Ken Shamrock would finally get his shot at Tito Ortiz.

The UFC had struggled under the new ownership. They expected that getting the sport approved in Nevada and back on cable pay-per-view would solve all the ills from the SEG days. Instead, the sport failed to thrive. Part of the problem was the absence of a changing of the guard. The UFC was presenting a new generation of fighters, like Ortiz, as among the best in the world. Fans weren't buying it, in part because they had never seen this new group compete against the legends of old. That's what drove this fight and made it the most successful UFC pay-per-view since Shamrock's early days with the company.

Shamrock and Ortiz played up their feud to the hilt, throwing chairs during press conferences and talking trash back and forth. It seemed like phony pro wrestling theatrics, but Shamrock had worked himself into a legitimate frothing at the mouth frenzy. He had thought about the disrespect and thought about the T-shirt for three years. Now he was ready to make Ortiz pay. Unfortunately, a knee injury hurt Shamrock's training. Instead of making a natural cut to 205 pounds, an inability to do cardio work on his bum wheel forced Shamrock into a crash diet. By fight time he was exhausted and far from his best. Ortiz took advantage, battering the 38-year-old veteran for three rounds before Ken's student Tra Telligman threw in the towel.

The win established Ortiz as the top fighter in the business, but without Shamrock, the company still struggled to draw money with their pay-per-view shows. Something about Shamrock just made people want to watch him; he had that "it" factor you hear so much about but can't ever quite seem to be able to put your finger on.

In 2005, the UFC struck gold with the reality television show ***The Ultimate Fighter***. The show had been a qualified ratings success, drawing some big numbers early but losing momentum when the **Chris Leben–Josh Koscheck** grudge match turned into a snoozefest. **Zuffa** needed a strong final show to put themselves in the best possible negotiating position. Needing to attract interest, Dana White knew just who to call: Ken Shamrock. While everyone remembers the fight between **Forrest Griffin** and **Stephan Bonnar**, it was Shamrock and rising star **Rich Franklin** who drew the television ratings in the main event.

It was clear that the old-school stars were still money in the bank for the UFC. Royce Gracie, the jiu-jitsu star who fought Shamrock twice in the early

days of MMA, had come back to draw more pay-per-view buys that anyone in history against **Matt Hughes** at UFC 60. White and his matchmaker **Joe Silva** knew of one main event that could top even that mega-event: the rematch between Tito Ortiz and Shamrock.

The two built towards what everyone expected would be the culminating fight of their long feud as competing coaches on the third season of *The Ultimate Fighter*. It was the best rated season of the show in history (until the recent debut of internet sensation **Kimbo Slice**) and the focus was on the squabbling coaches. Shamrock had a hair trigger temper. It was part of his wrestling character in the WWE, but he was like that in real life too. His televised arguments with Ortiz seemed like they would break down into physical violence at a moment's notice. By the time the two were scheduled to meet in the Octagon, the fight was red hot.

Unfortunately, the fight couldn't possibly live up to this electric build-up. Shamrock just wasn't the fighter he used to be and was quickly taken off his feet, slammed to the mat, and elbowed into oblivion. He was clearly seconds away from being finished, when referee **Herb Dean** stopped the fight after just 1:18. Shamrock hopped immediately to his feet, furious about the early stop. The fans were incensed, and the show's 775,000 pay-per-view buys seemed

In Their Own Words: Ken Shamrock on coaching *The Ultimate Fighter* 3

"Anytime you're put into a situation where the fighter [and] the trainer have to work with each other whether they mesh or not, it always becomes a problem. Then, when there are one or two guys you don't really mesh with, then it trickles down to the rest of the team. Unfortunately for me, not that the fighters were bad or anything, I just got a bunch of guys on the team that I didn't see eye to eye with. Me being a coach and running my own team for a long time, being able to call all the shots, it didn't work very well for me to have guys telling me what they wanted to do.

"It's a tough thing for a coach, especially for me. For so long I've been able to control things and bring these guys up and nurture them and mold them into great fighters. I was very successful at that early on. But when I was thrown into that situation, I knew the score. I knew there could be problems and there were. I had a hard time with that. Other guys, like Tito and Randy, really had some success with it. But for me it was difficult."

less important than brewing fan discontent.

A third match was announced, not for pay-per-view, but as a television special on Spike TV. To apologize for the second fight, the UFC was literally giving away a fight between its two biggest stars. Little had changed between July and October. This time Shamrock lasted two minutes instead of one. In the post-fight chaos, Shamrock tracked Ortiz down. “It was all business,” Shamrock told Ortiz, who was trying to pull away from his bitter enemy. “You and me made a lot of money together. It was all business.”

It would have been a great ending to a magnificent career. But fighters rarely go so quietly into that good night. Shamrock, in his forties, still thought he had more to give. He also needed the money. He had lost everything he made in his lucrative wrestling days and needed to fight to put food on the table. The results, as they often are for older fighters hanging on, were embarrassing for the proud Shamrock.

Journeyman Robert Berry knocked him out in his ProElite debut for **Cage Rage**, but Shamrock’s star had seemingly not dimmed. He was tapped to fight Kimbo Slice for **EliteXC**, main eventing their second card on CBS. It would end up being the highest rated MMA show ever in North America; unfortunately for everyone involved, Ken Shamrock didn’t end up fighting.

Hours before the fight, Shamrock confronted EliteXC management about his pay. He was furious that it was lower than Slice’s, but officials insisted he stick with their signed agreement. Shortly after that blow-up, executives were shocked to find out Shamrock had cut himself during some last-minute training. Instead of using the old fighter’s trick of super-gluing the cut shut, Shamrock had chosen to go and get stitches, knowing that meant he wouldn’t be able to fight.

As if he hadn’t tainted his reputation enough, things went from bad to worse. After the EliteXC debacle, no major promoter would touch Shamrock. Instead, he promoted his own fight, a win over Ross Clifton, a nondescript fighter with a losing record. Things were looking up. Shamrock was scheduled to fight fellow WWE alumnus **Bobby Lashley** in March 2009 when the California State Athletic Commission made an announcement many had expected to hear for years. Shamrock had tested positive for three illegal anabolic **steroids** — Norandrosterone, Noretiocholanolone, and Stanozolol.

Suspended for a year, Shamrock would be almost 46 when eligible to make a return to the ring. It seemed likely that his fighting career would continue, as longtime fans would continue to pretend anything that happened post-UFC was all part of one horrible extended nightmare.

Sherdog

The world's biggest MMA Web site, Sherdog has top-notch podcasts, exclusive content, and the amazing Fight Finder, an online database that chronicles the fight records of everyone from **Chuck Liddell** to the local fighter next door.

"Sherodogian" has not become an adjective because of these great features, but instead because Sherdog also has a very active message board, home to the best and worst of MMA discourse. Many of the forum posters are amazingly knowledgeable. Others are a step behind on the evolutionary scale. The stereotypical Sherdog poster trashes "noobs" and "nut huggers" and considers every fighter in the world overrated — except his favorite.



Sherdog has also become the home of MMA's rogue journalists. The site went to war with **UFC** President **Dana White**, who was furious when Sherdog covered Japanese promotions **K-1** and **Pride** as if they were the equals of the **UFC**. White demanded that the site keep the focus on the **UFC**, even sending Sherdog owner Jeff Sherwood obscene text messages when the site covered one of **K-1**'s failed American adventures.

White ended up pulling the media credentials from the whole organization. Urban legend says Sherdog lost their credentials because then editor Josh Gross (now with *Sports Illustrated*) spoiled the fourth season of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** on his radio show, revealing the results of the pre-taped reality program. The credentials were actually pulled months earlier, primarily because of the coverage of competing promotions.

From there, the relationship with the **UFC** went from bad to worse. Gross wrote an open letter critical of **UFC**'s response to rampant **steroid** use in the sport. White was furious.

You might have expected the relationship between the top Web site and the top promotion to improve when the hypercritical Gross moved on, but instead the powder keg exploded. New editor Loretta Hunt's seemingly innocuous story about managers losing their backstage passes to **UFC** fights sent White into an embarrassing rampage where he insulted homosexuals and called Hunt "a dumb bitch."

The controversy propelled Hunt and Sherdog into the national media spotlight. The end result was Sherdog's triumphant return to UFC events. The sport's chronicle of record is back in business with the sport's biggest promotion — but just for a handful of events. Soon a disagreement (and an appearance by Sherwood and Hunt in Matt Lindland's *Fighting Politics* documentary) left Sherdog once again on the outside looking in. Of course, that didn't stop Sherdog from continuing to provide the most diverse and in-depth coverage of the sport available anywhere online.

Sherk, Sean

Nickname: Muscle Shark

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 8/5/73

Debut: Dangerzone: Mahnomen (6/19/99)

Career Record: 33-4-1

Notable Wins: Karo Parisyan (RSF 1, RSF 2); Nick Diaz (UFC 59); Kenny Florian (UFC 64)

Notable Losses: Matt Hughes (UFC 42); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 56); B.J. Penn (UFC 84)

"I've probably eaten more baby food in my lifetime than any baby out there," Sean Sherk once told **Sherdog** writer T.J. De Santis. Take that, babies.

The *UFC: All Access* episode that aired prior to Sherk's **UFC 73** lightweight title defense revealed, however, that baby food and hard work alone aren't necessarily enough to reach the highest levels of the sport: Sherk was also fanatical about nutritional supplements, ingesting dozens a day. And, if you believe Sherk's version of things, it was a tainted supplement that caused him to test positive for Nandrolone. Or maybe it was laboratory error, "carryover" from previous urinalyses? Whichever Sherk explanation you favor, the end result was a fine and suspension from the California State Athletic Commission, and an end to Sherk's lightweight title reign. (In an embarrassing turn, challenger **Hermes Franca** tested positive for Drostanolone at the same event.)

The **steroid** suspension was by far the biggest setback in Sherk's otherwise exceptional career. Often maligned as a one-dimensional, **lay and pray** wrestler, Sherk so excelled in that single aspect of the game that his limitations as a fighter were rarely exposed. Despite his diminutive stature, Sherk competed most of his career as a welterweight and was undefeated in 18 fights before running into a prime **Matt Hughes**. Sherk managed to go the distance with the champ and even win rounds at a time when Hughes seemed all but unbeatable. Fighting anywhere and everywhere, Sherk



amassed 12 more wins before his next loss, a TKO at the hands of a physically overwhelming **Georges St. Pierre**.

Soon thereafter, Sherk opted to move down to the UFC's rebooted lightweight division, winning a convincing decision over a game **Kenny Florian** to become the organization's first champion at 155 pounds in four years. Stripped of the title after his first defense, Sherk returned from suspension only to be knocked out by a spectacular flying knee from **B.J. Penn**, who openly taunted Sherk about his steroid suspension in the build-up to their championship fight.

Sherk's only career defeats had come against true legends in the sport until a baffling loss at the hands of heavy underdog **Frankie Edgar** at UFC 98. Sherk, once a dominating wrestler who gutted out methodical wins over some of MMA's best, has gradually drifted towards a **boxing**-heavy style that suits neither his talents nor his frame, and does not bode well for his future at the elite level.

Shields, Jake

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 1/9/79

Debut: CFF: The Cobra Qualifier (10/23/99)

Career Record: 25-4-1

Notable Wins: Hayato Sakurai (Shooto: 2002 Year End Show); Yushin Okami (ROTR 9); Nick Thompson (EliteXC: Unfinished Business); Robbie Lawler (Strikeforce: Lawler vs. Shields); Dan Henderson (Strikeforce: Nashville)

Notable Loss: Akira Kikuchi (Shooto: 2004 Year End Show)

For years, Jake Shields was the best fighter in the world who had never made it. He never appeared on *The Ultimate Fighter* or on UFC pay-per-view. He's never been on Spike TV and never fought in Japan for **Pride**. And for a long time there was a good reason for that. The phrase "boring **lay and pray** fighter" was coined with Jake Shields in mind.

There was a stretch from 2001 to 2006 when 11 of Shields' 12 fights went to a decision. This probably seems completely foreign to many new fans of the sport. To them Shields is an exciting finisher, a man who has ended seven fights in a row decisively, all seven on national television or pay-per-view. But in the beginning it was a very different story.

Shields exploded onto the MMA scene with a huge win over **Hayato "Mach" Sakurai** for **Shooto** in Japan. At the time, Sakurai was considered a top three fighter at 170 pounds and Shields was immediately on the map as a big time player at welterweight. Although getting the win was a huge thrill, there was plenty of criticism as well. Many hard-core fans thought Shields did little more than hold Sakurai down and his corner was literally yelling at him to do nothing at all and let the clock run out.

That Shields is long gone. In his place is a confident professional, one of the very best ground fighters in the world, who is slowly but surely improving his striking game as well. Shields became the first and only **EliteXC** welterweight champion, but a lack of quality opponents at that weight outside of the UFC forced his hand. Shields made the move up to middleweight and quickly dispatched the EliteXC champion in that weight class (**Robbie Lawler**) as well.

Shields may be the last world-class fighter to never step into the Octagon or Pride ring, but he's not an unknown anymore. Shields was selected as **Dan Henderson's** first opponent when the former Pride and UFC star made his **Strikeforce** debut. The fight was supposed to propel Henderson to national television stardom. Instead, millions watching CBC saw Shields win easily. Instead of making a star, Strikeforce lost one: it was the last fight on Jake's

In Their Own Words: Shields on his life-altering fight with Hayato Sakurai

"It was great to get a shot at the number one guy. I only got 13 days notice, so obviously they were bringing me in to lose. They fly you over two or three days before the fight. It's a 12-hour flight, going forward 17 hours. Once you get there, they have you scheduled for an hour of training time at 10 p.m., it's hard to find saunas, and things like that. But it was a good experience overall and helped bring me up in the MMA rankings. I did start with some top fighters early on, with short notice. It makes a difference when you get to train for six or eight weeks and have the necessary cardio going into the fight."

contract. Soon after, Shields was on his way to the UFC, finally getting his shot in the world's biggest promotion.

Shoji, Akira

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 194 lbs

Born: 1/31/74

Debut: KP vs. WK: Koppo vs. Keisyukai (11/30/96)

Career Record: 14-16-5

Notable Wins: Wallid Ismail (Pride 4); Guy Mezger (Pride 6)

Notable Losses: Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 5); Mark Coleman (Pride 2000 Grand Prix Finals); Dan Henderson (Pride 14); Semmy Schilt (Pride 16); Paulo Filho (Pride 22, Pride Bushido 4); Mauricio Rua (Pride Bushido 1); Kazuo Misaki (Deep 23rd Impact); Gilbert Yvel (Pride 34)

Stout in build and in spirit, Akira Shoji has fought a who's who of fighters nobody should ever even consider fighting at only 5'8" and 194 pounds. Consider the madness, if you will, of a man Shoji's size stepping into the ring against **Mark Coleman** or **Igor Vovchanchyn** at or very near their dominant, destructive peaks. And consider the significance of taking both men the distance, albeit in a losing battle. Akira Shoji never racked up the kinds of wins you might expect of a 23-fight **Pride** veteran, and his best wins came early in his career: a questionable split decision win over the hapless **Guy Mezger**, and a second-round stoppage of fiery **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** fighter Wallid Ismail. But Shoji became a fan favorite on sheer guts and fighting spirit. And a bit of showmanship: although his wins were few and far between, Shoji always made the most of them, shouting wildly to the crowd in celebration. Shoji's

best work remains his draw with **Renzo Gracie** at the inaugural Pride show, where he managed to hang on the ground with the Gracie family's best all-around fighter.

Shooto

Definitions of Shooto vary. To some, it's a slightly obscure Japanese mixed martial arts promotion — the very first mixed martial arts promotion, in fact, organizing amateur events as early as 1986 and staging professional fights in 1989, four years before either **Pancrase** or the **UFC** got off the ground. To others, including those who run it and many who compete under its banner, Shooto is not just another MMA promotion, but instead its own distinct sport, indeed its own distinct martial art. **Caol Uno**, when recently asked by a fashion publication to introduce himself, answered in part, "My life revolves around training and the mastery of techniques, more specifically Shooto, a form of martial art that continues to evolve." Shooto isn't a company he competed for; it's the discipline he trains in. Note, also, that Uno had competed in Shooto a grand total of once in the nine years before that interview, and yet Shooto defined him as a martial artist still. It's an integral aspect of his identity.

Regardless of your perspective on that academic point, whether you understand Shooto to be a style unto itself or a proto-mixed martial arts organization ahead of its time, there is one thing both sides of the question can invariably agree on: Shooto is really, *really* awesome.

It began in 1986, when Satoru Sayama, formerly New Japan Pro Wrestling's original Tiger Mask, grew weary of the world of **professional wrestling**. The shoot-style UWF was tantalizingly close to real, but still not real enough to satisfy Sayama. And so Shooto. The name, derived from the English word "shoot" — to wrestle for real, rather than follow a predetermined script — is represented by Japanese characters that can be translated back into English as "learn combat." That's fitting, since there is a kind of pedagogy at work in Shooto's well-developed amateur system, which every aspiring Shooto fighter must successfully navigate before earning professional status.

Professional Shooto status hardly guarantees a life of fame and fortune. Despite the passion and loyalty Shooto inspires among both fighters and fans, it has only ever attracted a small audience. But that audience has been witness to some of the greatest fights and the greatest fighters Japan has produced. **Hayato Sakurai**, **Caol Uno**, **Rumina Sato**, **Takanori Gomi**, **Shinya Aoki**, **Kid Yamamoto**, and **Akiri Kikuchi** are but a few of the many who've come up through the ranks; **Matt Hughes**, **Anderson Silva**, **Joachim Hansen**, and **Carlos**

Newton a handful of the top fighters from around the world who have competed in the Shooto ring. All have taken in part in something quite unlike anything else in mixed martial arts.

Side control (Side mount)

A dominant grappling position in which the attacker lays across his opponent's body and pins him chest to chest. This elastic term encompasses an unusually broad range of techniques, from a solid, knees-down, square-hipped side pin, through the assorted spread-legged kesa gatame (scarf hold) variations of **judo** and the powerful, transitional uki gatame (floating hold) or knee-on-belly position prized by **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** stylists, to modern no-**gi** refinements like the iconoclastic **Eddie Bravo**'s twister side control. The term sometimes stretches so far as include a side control that isn't really a *side* control at all — the **north-south** position.

What unites this disparate group of holds and positions is the incredible range of offensive possibilities available to the fighter on top: knees, elbows, punches, hammer fists, and a seemingly endless assortment of submissions attacking either the upper or lower body. The fighter on bottom is limited largely to positional work, compelled to look either for incremental improvements to **half-guard** and **guard**, or for sweeps to assume a top position of his own. Although it's possible for a fighter held in side control to secure and even finish with a **Kimura** or **triangle choke** from this disadvantageous position, it's far from likely against even a moderately skilled top player.

See also **positional hierarchy**

Silva, Anderson

Nickname: The Spider

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 4/14/75

Debut: Meca World Vale Tudo 1 (5/27/00)

Career Record: 27-4

Notable Wins: Hayato Sakurai (Shooto: To the Top 7); Carlos Newton (Pride 25); Jeremy Horn (Gladiator FC Day 2); Rich Franklin (UFC 64, UFC 77); Dan Henderson (UFC 82); Forrest Griffin (UFC 101); Chael Sonnen (UFC 117)

Notable Losses: Daiju Takase (Pride 26); Ryo Chonan (Pride Shockwave 2004)

It was easy to be skeptical when **Dana White** began trumpeting Anderson Silva as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world. It seemed a strange distinction for a fighter who sat atop a notoriously weak division. The **UFC**'s middleweight ranks have always been thin to the point of meagerness when compared with the depth



the company has historically had to offer at both light heavyweight and welterweight, and pointing to Silva as the pound-for-pound best seemed more like a way to rebut talk of the unattainable **Fedor Emelianenko**'s greatness than anything else. But as time wore on, and the wins continued to roll in — against credible light heavyweight opposition, in addition to an ever-increasing list of middleweight contenders — it became a lot easier to buy what White had been selling all along. Although Anderson Silva has never been a consensus selection as MMA's all-around best, he's undeniably a necessary part of that conversation.

Before he hit the UFC, Silva was nowhere near that level. A former **Shooto** and **Cage Rage** title holder, Silva had no doubt had his moments: he'd handed **Hayato Sakurai** his first career loss; he'd stopped **Carlos Newton** at a time when that still mattered; and he'd knocked out the hapless Tony Fryklund with a ridiculous reverse

elbow that commentator **Stephen Quadros** rightly described as something out of Tony Jaa's *Ong Bak*. But he'd also looked clueless on the ground, trapped in a methodical **triangle choke** applied by the unremarkable **Daiju Takase**. He'd also found himself on the wrong end of one of the most spectacular submissions ever seen, **Ryo Chonan**'s flying scissor heel hook. **Chris Leben**, just before he stepped into the cage to meet Silva in his Octagon debut, had it right when he told Spike TV's *Ultimate Fight Night* audience, "I've seen Anderson Silva beat some very tough guys. On the flip side of that, the guys that beat Anderson Silva haven't exactly been the best. They've been the guys that refuse to play into his game plan." But what he said next — "After he gets in there with me and I knock him out, he may want to go back to Japan or somewhere where the competition's a little easier" — didn't hit the mark in quite the same way.

The long, lean Silva lit Leben up with precision striking the likes of which is rarely seen in mixed martial arts. Given the limited pool of middleweight challengers, Silva was rewarded for his efforts with an immediate title shot at **Rich Franklin** — whom Silva utterly dominated in the **clinch**, delivering a barrage of knees to the body to set up the knee to the face that would spell the end for the defending champion. It was a thoroughly impressive, one-sided drubbing of one of the UFC's middleweight poster boys. **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt Travis Lutter, fresh off his tournament win on the fourth season of ***The Ultimate Fighter***, was next in line for a title shot, but blew his chance by missing weight, and then blew the fight despite having Silva pinned beneath him in **mount**. Silva, a Brazilian Jiu-jitsu black belt himself, whose ground skills have come an awful long way since Takase got the best of him, ultimately got the better of Lutter on the ground, finishing with a triangle choke of his own while simultaneously raining down elbows on Lutter's trapped head. Silva's ground game had started to catch up with his perhaps unparalleled striking.

Former King of **Pancrase Nate Marquardt** fared no better, nor did a returning Rich Franklin. The only real challenge he's faced as middleweight champion was the cagey veteran **Dan Henderson**, **Pride's** first and only welterweight (183 pounds) title holder. Henderson managed to control Silva on the ground in the first round of their UFC 82 title unification bout, but Silva had his way with him in the second, landing some serious blows standing before outmaneuvering Henderson on the ground to secure the **rear naked choke**.

Seemingly and justifiably bored at middleweight, and with a desire to fight as often as possible, Silva took a fight against light heavyweight journeyman James Irvin. "There's no reason I can't knock him out or catch him with something," Irvin reasoned. "He's *much* smaller than me." Irvin, it turned out, was wrong on both counts. Silva hardly looked undersized standing across the Octagon from the regular light heavyweight competitor — and Silva put him on his back with a huge right hand a minute into the first round, ending the bout seconds later. Not that James Irvin was a world beater — far from it — but Silva's clear demonstration that he was a legitimate presence in a weight class 20 pounds above his best weight was convincing proof that he belonged at or near the top of everyone's pound-for-pound ranking.

But that kind of status can be a curse. Expectations and anticipation for Silva's bouts grew to the point that winning wasn't enough — if Silva wasn't styling on his opponents, bobbing and weaving and landing precision strikes at will like he did in his second fight with Rich Franklin, he was underperforming. Silva was well on his way to outscoring **Patrick Côté** when the French-Canadian slugger blew out his knee, and Dana White publicly derided

the performance. Silva controlled fellow Brazilian Thales Leites for five rounds en route to a record ninth consecutive win in the UFC, but he was chastized for playing it safe. It wasn't until Silva moved up once again, this time to face fan favorite and former light heavyweight champion **Forrest Griffin**, that Silva would silence his critics, and have the MMA world universally singing his praises once again. Silva made poor Griffin look like a rank amateur, knocking him down three times in the first round, and finishing him with a jab thrown off his back foot. Griffin, humbled, ran from the cage once he collected his bearings.

Silva's that good. There's no one in sight at middleweight who can touch him, and he's proven himself championship-level at light heavyweight as well. **Yushin Okami**, the last man to defeat Silva — albeit by a controversial disqualification — seems nowhere near Silva's level at this point, and his slow, deliberate pace has kept him from moving up the card despite win after win. A potentially huge fight against welterweight champion **Georges St. Pierre** has been discussed, but seems unlikely given the considerable size difference between the two. It's hard to know what the future has in store for Anderson Silva, who has spoken more than once about an imminent retirement from the sport, and a long cherished dream to face the great Roy Jones Jr., not in the Octagon but in the **boxing** ring. That might be the one fight Anderson Silva can't win. But at this stage of the game, given the absolute dominance he's shown since first making his presence felt on American soil, you can't blame him for seeking out new challenges.

Silva, Antonio

Nicknames: Junior, Big Foot

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 265 lbs

Born: 9/14/79

Debut: UK Mixed Martial Arts Championship 10 (3/6/05)

Career Record: 14-2

Notable Wins: Tom Erikson (Hero's 5); Wesley Correia (EliteXC: Destiny); Ricco Rodriguez (EliteXC: Street Certified); Justin Eilers (EliteXC: Unfinished Business); Andrei Arlovski (Strikeforce: Heavy Artillery)

Notable Losses: Eric Pele (BodogFight: USA vs. Russia); Dan Henderson (Strikeforce: Nashville)

You could be forgiven for confusing Antonio Silva with Paulo César da Silva, better known by *nom de guerre* **Giant Silva**. Both are enormous Brazilian heavyweight/super heavyweight mixed martial artists, legitimate acromegalic giants, but the similarities end there. Giant Silva is a gimmick, not a fighter

— Antonio Silva is the real deal, a comparatively quick and athletic heavyweight hovering just outside the division’s top ten. The first and only **EliteXC** heavyweight champion before the company imploded, Silva has built his fearsome reputation with impressive wins over real competition, like former **UFC** heavyweight champion **Ricco Rodriguez**, and solid pros like **Tom Erikson**, the limited but hard-headed **Wesley Correia**, and the late Justin Eilers. The only real bump in the road for Silva so far was a positive test for the banned steroid Boldenone, a result that earned him a one-year suspension from the California State Athletic Commission. Japanese promotions have never let little things like that get in the way, though, and **Sengoku** welcomed “Junior” with open arms for two 2009 bouts. With that episode behind him, Silva joined **Strikeforce**’s suddenly intriguing heavyweight division, where he could soon find himself squaring off against the great **Fedor Emelianenko**.

Silva, Giant

Real name: Paulo César da Silva

Height: 7’2”

Weight: 385 lbs

Born: 7/21/63

Debut: Pride Shockwave 2003 (12/31/2003)

Career Record: 2-6

Notable Win: Chad “Akebono” Rowan (Dynamite!! 2006)

Notable Losses: Heath Herring (Pride Shockwave 2003); Naoya Ogawa (Pride Critical Countdown 2004); Ikuhisa Minowa (Pride Bushido 10)

Paulo César da Silva was a basketball player who competed for the Brazilian national team. He was also a professional wrestler, who worked, for a time, in a minor role for the World Wrestling Federation. Paulo César da Silva may have been any number of things to any number of people, but he was never a fighter. However, that didn’t stop **Pride** from parading him out to the ring semi-regularly to make a spectacle of himself.

Silva had no martial arts background to speak of, excluding a crash course in **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** from Ricardo and Ralek Gracie, but his sheer size made him problem enough for **Heath Herring**, at least, who needed three rounds to finish the debuting giant. None of Silva’s other bouts — neither the **Kimura** wins over two largely clueless former sumo wrestlers, Henry Miller and **Akebono**, nor the losses to fighters upwards of 200 pounds smaller than him — made it out of the first round.

But even watching Silva flail around the ring for a minute or two was painful. Not just because it was embarrassingly unskilled and just plain bad, though it certainly was both of those things, but because the gentle giant was clearly a man with no inclination whatsoever towards the sport of mixed

martial arts — or any other physical activity the least bit rugged, for that matter. Silva showed no interest in the competition, in either hitting or being hit, only in earning a paycheck for his family. And while that is itself a respectable aim, you don't have to respect the spectacle that deprives a man of his dignity in pursuit of that end.

Silva, Joe

Joe Silva, the **UFC**'s vice president of Talent Relations, has been searching for the perfect fighting style all his life. He tried a variety of martial arts, but none seemed to work exactly as advertised. To make matters worse, when he questioned sensei about real world application of their carefully crafted kata, he was often rudely rebuffed.

The closest thing to a fighting style that actually worked were the **professional wrestling**—rules matches he put on with other kids in his neighborhood growing up. Before there was such a thing as **Pancrase**, Silva was engaging in real wrestling matches with his buddies, and learning quickly what worked and what didn't.

When Silva saw the first **UFC**, it was like winning the lottery. Here is what he had been looking for all along. Before the advent of the internet, he was the ultimate superfan, sending in suggestions to the **UFC** brass. His well thought out and well crafted missives got plenty of attention, and he was soon brought in as a consultant.

While others in the **SEG** hierarchy had a variety of business skills and creative ideas for promoting the company, only Silva knew the fight game. As fight promotions popped up worldwide, he followed them all with a fan's passion and, thanks to years of experimentation, as a seasoned martial artist as well.

After the fall of **Extreme Fighting**, the **UFC** hired matchmaker **John Perretti**, but never fully let him in. The controlling Perretti was one of the least popular figures on the fighting circuit, an intelligent and verbose micromanager who wasn't afraid to tell you exactly what he thought. The **UFC** management used Silva to help rein Perretti in: when he told them something about a fighter, they would often double-check it with Silva before running with the idea.

When **Zuffa** purchased the **UFC** in 2001, Silva was one of the few employees from the **SEG** era to join the new team, where he quickly became a member of the inner circle. **UFC** President **Dana White** and owner **Lorenzo Fertitta** are both aggressive and impulsive decision makers. It's Silva's role to play devil's advocate, offering advice as needed. While White and Fertitta focus on the big

In Their Own Words: Lorenzo Fertitta on hiring Joe Silva

"The UFC literally only had two or three employees. And they had a matchmaker – his name was John Perretti. He did a good job and the prior owner, **Bob Meyrowitz**, used to use Perretti to put on the fights. He also had this other guy, stashed away, that nobody really knew about. His name was Joe Silva. He would bounce things off Joe Silva to kind of get a second opinion . . .

"When we took over the company John Perretti left to do something else. We were left hanging out there without a matchmaker. Dana actually had a conversation with **Tito Ortiz** and Tito said, 'You know who you should talk to? There's this kid that nobody really knows about – his name is Joe Silva. He's smarter than anybody in the business and he's kind of the go-to guy to provide information for Bob Meyrowitz. You should talk to him.'

"We flew Joe Silva out and had an instant connection. We couldn't believe how smart he was. He was like a walking encyclopedia of the history of the UFC. He's a very strategic thinker and he puts on great fights."

picture, Silva runs the day-to-day operations of talent relations from his home in Richmond, Virginia.

He books most of the bouts on every UFC fight card, carefully matching up opponents and building fighters for a run at UFC gold. Exceptionally well organized, with a keen mathematical mind, Silva manages a roster of more than 200 fighters with skill and aplomb, helping make every UFC card among the more competitive and entertaining in the industry.

Silva, Wanderlei

Nickname: The Axe Murderer

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 7/3/76

Debut: Brazilian Vale Tudo 6 (11/01/96)

Career Record: 33-10-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Dan Henderson (Pride 12); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 13, Pride 17, Pride Total Elimination 2003); Hidehiko Yoshida (Pride Final Conflict 2003, Pride Total Elimination 2005); Quinton Jackson (Pride Final Conflict 2003); Kazuhiro Nakamura (Pride Critical Countdown 2005); Ricardo Arona (Pride Shockwave 2005); Kazuyuki Fujita (Pride Critical Countdown Absolute); Keith Jardine (UFC 84)

Notable Losses: Vitor Belfort (UFC 17.5); Tito Ortiz (UFC 25); Ricardo Arona (Pride Final Conflict 2005); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Final Conflict Absolute); Dan Henderson (Pride 33); Chuck Liddell (UFC 79); Quinton Jackson (UFC 92); Rich Franklin (UFC 99)

Wanderlei Silva is terrifying. With his tattooed head shaved bare, his dead-eyed stare, and his mouth hanging ever so slightly agape, his presence in the corner before a fight is so threatening that even the most routine movement — his trademark wrist-roll warm-up, for instance — takes on an air of menace. And that's *before* the bell rings, before the wild-man rush across the ring, the thunderous looping punches, the head kicks, the knees, the soccer kicks, the stomps. Before any of that has even started, Wanderlei Silva is the scariest man in a scary, scary sport.

Silva made a pair of **UFC** appearances early on — blitzed in under a minute by a prime **Vitor Belfort**, laid on for three rounds by **Tito Ortiz** — but it was in **Pride** that Silva made his mark. Despite his wide open, almost feral style, his complete willingness to take a shot in order to land one, it took seven years and 27 fights for anyone to put Silva away inside the Pride ring. And over that period, few in the history of the sport have been so devastating: the three brutal beatings of **Kazushi Sakuraba**, Pride's great hero, and the total domination



In Their Own Words: Wanderlei Silva on giving the fans what they want to see

"I know what the fans like. I know what the fans want to see. I give them a show. I lose sometimes, because I take chances. But I have more respect from my fans and the fighters. My fans know I give everything I have. Win or lose, that's just one part of the fight. A good show. I want to give fans a good show. This is entertainment, not just a fight."

of **Quinton Jackson** in the **clinch** not once but twice stand out among Silva's many conquests. There were impressive wins in less one-sided affairs, too, like his pair of hard-fought decisions he took over **Hidehiko Yoshida**, Pride's top Japanese draw once Sakuraba's star began to fade, and his narrow decision win in a title defense against **Ricardo Arona**, in which Silva gained a measure of revenge against the man who had ended his long middleweight (205 pounds) unbeaten streak by controlling the fearsome striker on the ground in Pride's 2005 tournament. Through it all, Silva was standing in the middle of the ring, feet planted, swinging for the fences.

When it started to come apart, though, it came apart in a hurry. Silva had a tough road in Pride's 2006 open weight Grand Prix, facing **Mirko Cro Cop** two months after going toe-to-toe with **Kazuyuki Fujita**. He'd stopped the iron-headed Fujita with a barrage of soccer kicks, but Cro Cop — whom Silva had impressively fought to a draw four years before — was a different kind of problem, a precise heavyweight striker at the top of his game. There are two lasting images from their 2006 contest. The first is Silva standing in a neutral corner, pleading with the ringside doctors to leave him be and let him continue to fight before the eye they were examining swelled completely shut, blinding him. Silva knew he didn't have much time left, and he was desperate to get back to the middle of the ring and take his chances for as long as could. The second is Silva wilting to the canvas minutes later, the victim of a Cro Cop head kick he couldn't have seen coming.

A knockout loss to **Dan Henderson** cost Silva his long-held middleweight title in his final Pride bout, and the demise of the promotion set the stage for what had been the most anticipated fight in the sport for years: Wanderlei Silva versus **Chuck Liddell**. One can only imagine what this fight might have been had it happened in 2003, when the UFC entered Liddell in Pride's middleweight Grand Prix. Liddell's loss to Quinton Jackson kept that from happening. What we were left with in late 2007 was a battle between two

legends, but two fighters who had clearly lost a step, and whose chins weren't quite what they once were. It was, nevertheless, thrilling. Liddell, the counter puncher, got the better of most of the exchanges, but Silva got his licks in. Silva did what few fighters have ever managed: worry Liddell enough standing that Liddell felt compelled to take his opponent down. The unanimous decision rightly went to Liddell, but Silva acquitted himself well enough to win over the American audience, few of whom had seen "The Axe Murderer" in action before.

The showdown with Liddell was really the first step of a transformation Silva has undertaken, an entrance into a new phase of his career. He's no longer a championship-level fighter or serious contender. Now, he's a much-loved veteran whose role is to entertain his fans — who are there to celebrate what he's already done more than anticipate what he might yet do. A lightning fast win over **Keith Jardine** briefly offered hope that the old Wanderlei might be back, but a first-round loss to Jackson, whom Silva had destroyed twice before, confirmed that the present was not the past. Silva's gradual move down to the UFC's 185-pound middleweight division saw him meet **Rich Franklin** at a catchweight of 195 pounds in a bout that went the distance but didn't fall Silva's way.

He's not the same fighter. There's no question the heart is still there, but the power isn't and the quickness isn't either. The years of fierce battles have taken their toll, and there can be no doubt that Silva's best is behind him. But every time he enters the Octagon, there's still that aura about him, still that presence, still that possibility that something unforgettable — and *extraordinarily* violent — is about to happen.

Silveira, Marcus

Nickname: Conan

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 242 lbs

Born: 12/17/64

Debut: EF 1 (11/18/95)

Career Record: 6-4

Notable Win: Maurice Smith (WEF 7)

Notable Losses: Maurice Smith (EF 3); Kazushi Sakuraba (UFC 15.5); Dan Severn (WEF 9)

Carlson Gracie gave him the nickname when he was still just a kid. Even then, Marcus Silveira was big, strong, fast, and super-aggressive. He was "Conan," a barbarian in the ring.

Like Carlson's other top young prospect, **Vitor Belfort**, you'd have been hard pressed to tell Silveira was an accomplished grappler. He preferred to

stand and bang with his opponents, contesting most of his fights on his feet. That strategy worked well until he ran into kickboxing legend **Maurice Smith**.

The two met in the first round of a four-man tournament to crown the first **Extreme Fighting** heavyweight champion. Silveira was supposed to run over Smith on his way to the finals, where he was expected to meet Bart Vale. Instead, Silveira was knocked out by a Smith head kick and Vale fell to unheralded judoka Kazunari Murakami.

Silveira was just the first upset victim on Smith's road to the **UFC** title. But that memorable knockout loss wasn't the most remarkable fight of Conan's career. In the first UFC show in Japan, Conan was matched with young Japanese pro wrestler **Kazushi Sakuraba** as part of a four-man tournament.

Silveira won quickly, rocking Sakuraba with a punch. When Sakuraba dropped down for a takedown, referee "Big" **John McCarthy** thought he had been knocked out. It was one of Big John's rare mistakes, but Sakuraba wasn't content to let the bad decision stand.

He protested in the ring for almost an hour. Behind the scenes, the Japanese yakuza were also upset. Eventually, the decision was made that Sakuraba, and not alternate Tra Telligman, would replace the injured **Tank Abbott** in the tournament final against Silveira. In their second Fight of the Night, a dispirited and disinterested Silveira lost by **arm bar** in under four minutes.

Already past his prime before the sport hit big in the United States, Silveira left active competition to pass on his knowledge to a new generation of fighters. Silveira was one of the co-founders of the **American Top Team**, home of some of the world's best fighters like **Mike Brown** and **Thiago Alves**.

Sims, Wes

Nickname: The Project

Height: 6'10"

Weight: 260 lbs

Born: 10/12/79

Debut: RSF 2 (6/23/01)

Career Record: 22-13-1 (2 No Contests)

Notable Wins: Marcus Silveira (Absolute Fighting Championships 1); Kimo Leopoldo (Extreme Wars 5)

Notable Losses: Frank Mir (UFC 43, UFC 46); Tim Sylvia (SuperBrawl 38); Daniel Gracie (IFL: Championship 2006)

Wes Sims is one of MMA's most colorful characters. When there is legitimate debate about whether you are the nuttiest member of a team like **Hammer House**, you must be spectacularly interesting. Whether illegally stomping **Frank Mir** into the canvas, raising hell in Japan with his friends, or power bombing random MMA tomato cans, Sims is anything but boring.



At 6'10", he's one of the tallest men in the business. Unlike other giants, like K-1 and **Pancrase** champion Semmy Schilt, Sims has never quite figured out how to use that height to his advantage. His career has included plenty of setbacks. Even his most glorious night, the **UFC 43** shellacking of the favored Frank Mir, ended with a check in the loss column. Sims was inadvertently gouged in the eye during a Mir choke attempt. When he got back to his feet, he snapped. Instead of punching Mir, as the rules allowed, Sims put the boots to him. He was disqualified, but left the cage as the clear winner of the fight, if not the contest. Mir, however, settled any questions about who was truly the better fighter in a rematch at **UFC 46**.

Sims was soon on his way out of the UFC. He made a good

living fighting on the independent circuit, but a series of injuries and the accompanying medical bills, along with the loss of income, left him in a precarious position. Soon Sims was actually living on the street, joining the millions of homeless people in a hidden America few pay much attention to. After years of struggle, Sims started putting his life back together.

Sims was offered a chance at redemption, joining the cast of ***The Ultimate Fighter*** for the show's tenth season. Most of the contestants on the reality show complain about living for several months in the posh Las Vegas mansion. Sims was just the opposite. He was just happy to be out of the rain. Sims was getting a second chance, but he was not prepared to forget where he came from. He was working to draw attention to the plight of the homeless, at least as hard as he was working on his resurgent fight career.

In Their Own Words: Wes Sims on his famous fight with Frank Mir

"I watch it myself sometimes and just laugh. If it was **Pride** rules, I beat the shit out of him. Nobody likes somebody who thinks they're smarter than everybody else. Those kind of kids in school got the shit kicked out of them on a daily basis. They're probably rich now, designing the most elegant things in the world. But they're not very popular. I made a big mistake that night. I could sit here and dwell on it, go back and tell everybody how sorry I am . . . No. It's not my style. I made a mistake that night. I shouldn't have stomped him. I should have dropped down and punched the shit out of him. Beat his lights out. But he gouged me in the eye. I've forgiven Mir since then. It wasn't something he tried to do maliciously. He was trying to put a **rear naked choke** in and couldn't get it, so he grabbed my eyes to lift my head up. So when I got free, I stomped the dude. Like I said back then: it happened, it's over, bring it on."

Slice, Kimbo

Real name: Kevin Ferguson

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 235 lbs

Born: 2/8/74

Debut: Cage Fury Fighting Championships 5 (6/23/07)

Career Record: 4-2

Notable Wins: Ray Mercer (Cage Fury Fighting Championship 5); Tank Abbott (EliteXC: Street Certified); Houston Alexander (*The Ultimate Fighter* 10 Finale)

Notable Losses: Seth Petruzelli (EliteXC: Heat); Roy Nelson (*The Ultimate Fighter* 10)

Things have changed pretty dramatically for Rosemary Clarke's baby boy, Kevin Ferguson, since Hurricane Andrew hit in 1992, destroying his house and his life. For a time he lived in his car, a 1987 Nissan Pathfinder. But the man now known as Kimbo Slice never gave up hope. Today he's the most recognizable mixed martial artist on the planet, making hundreds of thousands of dollars, and seeing how long his 15 minutes of fame can extend. The shelf life of an internet YouTube sensation is short; yet Kimbo remains at the forefront of the public consciousness, like the scariest LOLcat or dancing baby imaginable.

Not long ago, Kimbo Slice was working as a bouncer at a strip club. This was the height of his ambition at the time — but opportunities seem to find Kimbo Slice, whether he's looking for them or not. One day an old high school friend named Mike "Icey Mike" Ember walked into Kimbo's joint and

left with the big man in tow. Kimbo became a limousine driver, a bodyguard, and finally part of a family. Ember was, not to mince words, a pornographer, one of the men behind the Reality Kings franchise of films and short clips.

The short videos weren't all hard-core action. Some were classic "ball in the groin" films one notch removed from *America's Funniest Home Videos*. In these, a sexy host would pay unsuspecting marks to let her friend tackle them or punch them in the arm as hard as he could. They would agree, trying to look tough in front of the hot young girl. And then out would come Kimbo Slice, a 240-pound bushy-bearded African American who was as intimidating a presence as you could imagine.

Other videos featured Kimbo throwing down in the streets. No one knew exactly where these videos were going, but they became the talk of the internet. More importantly they helped Kimbo Slice find his path in life.

"The very first fight, when I got a couple hundred dollars — that was big," Slice said. "That's when I decided to do this for a living. This is another way. I could start robbing, start selling dope or some shit like that. I didn't want to do that. My old girl, my mother, she wasn't with that. I couldn't get caught stealing something from somebody's house. Not with a mother like mine. This was an opportunity. I could take my ass to work and do it the honest way . . . What we did was raw. There was no training. It was just straight war. I'm coming right into your backyard. I'm gonna knock a nigga's ass out, leave his blood on the ground. And I'm dippin'."

Fortune 500 companies have trouble monetizing the internet; they're still looking for that magic application that turns clicks into cash. Kimbo Slice found it. People around the world were emailing each other links to Slice's street fights. He fought in backyards, South Beach alleys, and most comically, in a boatyard. Even **UFC** officials caught Kimbo fever, eventually bringing one of his opponents, police officer Sean Gannon, into the Octagon. Kimbo and Icey Mike started to attach dollar signs to Slice's enormous hands. He was cracking heads in the streets for next to nothing. But why give Kimbo away for free, especially when America was so willing to buy?

The rise was astronomical. He went from fighting a washed-up boxer named Ray Mercer on the Atlantic City boardwalk to main eventing the first MMA show ever held on network television in less than a year. **EliteXC** President Gary Shaw immediately saw Slice's potential. While the **UFC** had gone after Gannon, the white police officer, Shaw realized that fight fans found the dangerous street fighters more compelling.

Slice was immediately catapulted into main event fights. He was sent to the legendary **Bas Rutten** and **boxing** coach Randy Khatami to sculpt the rough

In Their Own Words: Kimbo Slice on street fights versus sport fights

"In a street fight, first of all you've got to have that respect from your homeboys and everybody in the street. They've got to know and understand what's about to happen here. If I knock your boy out, his crew got to know this nigga just got knocked out. You can't be pulling out pistols and talking about 'He need another chance' and this and all that. That has to be established before the two guys even engage in combat. There's no comparison though between a street fight and where I am right now as a professional fighter. A street fight is one-dimensional. All you have to worry about is a guy throwing punches. You don't have to worry about nothing except getting knocked the fuck out. In mixed martial arts, you have to train and be prepared. These guys have skills and these guys are professionals. And you can be hurt."

edges, but EliteXC didn't have time to wait on a finished product. They were millions in debt from the get-go and, despite his lack of experience, Kimbo was their most marketable and most popular fighter. He couldn't be built slowly on the undercard; in fact, Slice was the headliner for two fights on Showtime and for the first show ever on network television, EliteXC: Primetime on CBS.

Opponents were carefully selected for the new superstar. EliteXC would only consider fellow strikers, men who would keep the fight standing and allow Slice to do what he did best: punch people in the face. Kimbo was street certified, but there was little doubt that his fame had exceeded his skill level. Professional fighting at the highest levels is a tricky game. Fighters have to be able to navigate dangerous ground both standing and on the mat. There are dozens of techniques that Kimbo needed to be able to execute and, more importantly, defend against.

EliteXC was trying to buy Slice time, but then disaster struck. On CBS's third MMA card, the legendary, but now immobile and slightly punchy, **Ken Shamrock** suffered a late cut in training. With just hours to go before the fight was scheduled to begin, Slice had no opponent. Ken's adopted brother **Frank Shamrock** was briefly considered for the slot, but eventually EliteXC settled on journeyman **Seth Petruzelli**. When Petruzelli, a Smoothie King franchiser with dyed pink hair, knocked Slice out in just 14 seconds with an off-balance jab, Kimbo's tough guy aura was dented, if not outright destroyed.

Despite years of mocking Kimbo — par for the course if you were a fighter for the UFC's opposition — **Dana White** and the UFC were quick to sign Slice.

Strikeforce made an offer as well, but it was a pay cut when compared to his purses in EliteXC. There was more potential in the UFC, even if Slice had to start at the beginning. Some considered the offer to appear on ***The Ultimate Fighter***, a reality television show used to create new UFC stars, an insult. After all, Kimbo had drawn more television viewers than anyone on the UFC roster. But as a fighter, Kimbo Slice was right where he needed to be, learning the fight game from the bottom up.

The Ultimate Fighter season 10, centered around Slice and a selection of ex-NFL stars, set UFC television records, proving once again that Slice was a tremendous ratings draw if not yet a tremendous fighter. Kimbo Slice was now where he belonged all along: another cog in the UFC machine, co-existing with Dana White, the man who was once his most vocal critic.

“It’s not like we sit down together for tea and toast, but we’re businessmen,” Kimbo said. “He’s a promoter and I’m a fighter. We do what we do.”

Smackgirl

While fans in the west didn’t discover the excitement of women’s MMA until breakout star **Gina Carano** put the sport on the map in 2008, Japanese fans — the hard-cores, at least — had been watching the likes of Yuka Tsuji and Megumi Fuji light it up in Smackgirl for years. As the name implies, Smackgirl featured women’s mixed martial arts exclusively. Running from 2000 through 2008, the promotion staged as many as 12 shows a year, mostly in small Tokyo venues like Korakuen Hall, Differ Ariake, and, in the earliest days, the hopping Club Atom in Shibuya. Smackgirl rules called for no strikes to the head of a downed opponent and a scant 30-second limit for ground fighting, which meant a breakneck pace. But women’s MMA is a tough sell, a niche sport within a niche sport, and after a bad 2008 financially, the company was sold and reintroduced as Jewels, positioned as “Smackgirl’s daughter” by the Japanese fight press. Jewels has started strong, putting on solid shows in front of small but devoted audiences in Shinjuku Face, a 500-seat hall. Hardly Carano/**Santos** numbers, to be sure, but the action is top-notch.

Smith, Maurice

Nickname: Mo

Height: 6’2”

Weight: 220 lbs

Born: 12/13/61

Debut: Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 3 (11/08/93)

Career Record: 12-13



Notable Wins: Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 3); Marcus Silveira (EF 3); Mark Coleman (UFC 14); Tank Abbott (UFC 15); Marco Ruas (UFC 21, IFL: Chicago)

Notable Losses: Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 1); Ken Shamrock (Pancrase: King of Pancrase Tournament Round 1); Bas Rutten (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 4, Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 6); Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (Rings: Budokan Hall 1996); Kiyoshi Tamura (Rings: Maelstrom 6); Randy Couture (UFC 15.5); Kevin Randleman (UFC 19); Renzo Gracie (Rings: King of Kings 1999 Block B); Renato Sobral (UFC 28); Hidehiko Yoshida (Sengoku 3)

“He doesn’t know how to punch,” Maurice Smith said about **Mark Coleman** before their title fight at **UFC 14**. “He punches like, well, he punches like a girl, okay? He may punch hard, but it’s not like a solid punch. It’s more like scratching than hitting me.” Smith sounded awfully confident for an over-the-hill kickboxer who was about to step into the Octagon against the unstoppable Coleman. Smith had no doubt picked up a thing or two from his stints in **Pancrase** and **Extreme Fighting**, and his cross-training with **Frank Shamrock** at the **Lion’s Den** had to be worth something, but there was no question Maurice Smith stepped into the cage as a huge underdog. Grapplers had completely dominated the UFC to that point, and nobody expected this bout to go any differently.

But after Smith weathered the storm early — a quick takedown and a steady stream of head-butts from the champion — the fight went entirely his way. Coleman was gassed only two minutes into the fight, and Smith scored with countless elbows from the bottom. Once Smith finally escaped to his feet, the fight was effectively over. An exhausted Coleman had no answer for Smith standing. “The striker beats the grappler,” Greco-Roman **wrestling** Olympic gold medalist **Jeff Blatnick** said on commentary. “It’s the first time in the UFC that has really happened.” That’s Maurice Smith’s legacy.

Smith dropped his heavyweight title to **Randy Couture** only five months later. He stayed active for another three years, sensibly retired at the age of 38, and then resurfaced as an **International Fight League** coach and competitor after a seven-year absence from the sport. He even turned up in **Sengoku**, of all places, as a safe opponent for Japanese favorite **Hidehiko Yoshida**. Smith has won a few and he’s lost a few in the years since he claimed the UFC heavyweight title, but needless to say he’s never again equaled that game-changing night at UFC 14.

Smith, Patrick

Height: 6’2”

Weight: 225 lbs

Born: 8/28/63

Debut: UFC 1 (11/12/93)

Career Record: 18-14

Notable Wins: Scott Morris (UFC 2); Eric Esch (Yamma Pit Fighting)

Notable Losses: Ken Shamrock (UFC 1); Royce Gracie (UFC 2); Kimo Leopoldo (K-1 Legend 94); Kiyoshi Tamura (K-1 Hercules 95); Dave Beneteau (U-Japan); Marco Ruas (World Vale Tudo Championship 4)

Like many of the earliest **UFC** competitors, Patrick Smith wasn’t a skilled mixed martial artist by today’s standards, but he was a scary, scary man all the same. After losing to **Ken Shamrock** by **heel hook** less than two minutes into their UFC 1 contest, the kickboxer Smith devoted himself to the submission game, and took two matches by **guillotine choke** at UFC 2. But the most memorable moment of his career came in a knockout — a gruesome, frightening knockout of ninjitsu stylist Scott Morris, with huge elbows from the **mount** that left a bloodied Morris stumbling around the cage as he tried to regain his feet. It was a key image from the early days of the sport, proving beyond all doubt that what the audience was watching was real, and not some kind of particularly convincing **professional wrestling** ruse. An already scary Patrick Smith seemed even scarier when it emerged in 2008 that he’d been arrested for failing to register following a 1999 conviction for a



sexual assault on a child. Still an active fighter, his most high-profile bout in recent years came against Eric “Butterbean” Esch at the unbelievably awful **Yamma Pit Fighting** event, where Smith won again with a barrage of punches and elbows on the ground.

Sobral, Renato

Nickname: Babalu

Weight: 205 lbs

Debut: Desafio: Rio vs. Sao Pauls (9/27/97)

Height: 6'1"

Born: 9/7/75

Career Record: 36-8

Notable Wins: Kiyoshi Tamura (Rings: King of Kings Final 1999, Rings: King of Kings Final 2000); Mauricio Rua (IFC: Global Domination); Jeremy Horn (IFC: Global Domination); Robbie Lawler (Strikeforce: Los Angeles)

Notable Losses: Dan Henderson (Rings: King of Kings Final 1999); Fedor Emelianenko (Rings: 10th Anniversary); Chuck Liddell (UFC 40, UFC 62); Gegard Mousasi (Strikeforce: Carano vs. Cyborg)

Renato Sobral plays a key role in every **Chuck Liddell** highlight package you’ve ever seen. “Babalu” throws a low kick, backs away from a counter right hand,



and starts to shoot in for the takedown. It's at this exact moment that Babalu ends up on the wrong end of a Liddell head kick in what might be the most impressive KO of Liddell's storied career. Not Babalu at his best.

He *was* at his best, however, when he rattled off ten consecutive wins over the next three and a half years, including wins over **Mauricio Rua**, Trevor Prangle, and **Jeremy Horn** — all in the same night. Or, years before, when he competed in **Akira Maeda's Rings** promotion when it featured many of the best in the world, twice getting the best of **Kiyoshi Tamura** at a time when that meant something.

But despite his strong **wrestling** base, and submission skills befitting a **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt under Carlos Gracie Jr., Babalu was never able to break through to the major championship level. He fared no better in a second bout against Liddell than he did

in the first, knocked out less than two minutes into the first round. Only two fights later, Sobral was out of the **UFC**, apparently for good, after a bizarre finish against David Heath. Sobral choked a badly bloodied Heath into unconsciousness despite Heath's obvious attempts to submit and referee **Steve Mazzagatti's** instructions to break the hold. "He called me 'motherfucker,'" Sobral explained, sort of. "He has to learn respect. He deserved that shit."

Be that as it may, Babalu has since had to ply his trade in **Affliction** and **Strikeforce**, rather than the **UFC**. In his first Strikeforce fight, he won that organization's light heavyweight title, the most prestigious championship that can be awarded for a bout against Bobby Southworth. This will probably have to be enough for Babalu, as another shot at elusive **UFC** gold seems unlikely.

Sokoudjou, Rameau Thierry

Nickname: The African Assassin

Height: 6'

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 4/18/85

Debut: Total Combat 15 (6/15/06)

Career Record: 9-6

Notable Wins: Antonio Rogerio Nogueira (Pride 33); Ricardo Arona (Pride 34); Kazuhiro Nakamura (UFC 84); Bob Sapp (Dream 11)

Notable Losses: Lyoto Machida (UFC 79); Renato Sobral (Affliction: Day of Reckoning); Gegard Mousasi (Strikeforce: Fedor vs. Rogers); Ikuhisa Minowa (Dynamite!! 2009)

Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou looked like a world-beater — until he didn't. Sokoudjou burst onto the scene with an absolutely stunning first-round knock-out of upper-echelon light heavyweight **Antonio Rogerio Nogueira** that had everybody wondering whether the Cameroonian **judo** player was the next big thing, or a heavy-handed fighter who got lucky. When he followed that performance with another first-round KO, this time over an even more highly regarded **Pride** star, **Ricardo Arona**, there was every reason to believe he was the real deal. And so as Sokoudjou walked to the cage to make his **UFC** debut, looking slightly ridiculous in his enormous Predator mask, expectations were understandably high. But after being tooled on the ground and tapped out by **Lyoto Machida**, and knocked out by Luiz Cane, Sokoudjou's disappointing **UFC** tenure came to a quick end. After an equally ineffectual showing against **Renato Sobral** in **Affliction**, Sokoudjou found himself back in Japan, competing in **Dream's** Super Hulk Grand Prix alongside fellow tournament entrants Hong-Man Choi, **Bob Sapp**, and, yes, **Jose Canseco**. It was a long way down for a fighter who seemed near the top of the sport at age 23 only to appear washed-up at 25.

Sonnen, Chael

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 4/3/77

Debut: HFP 1: Rumble on the Reservation (3/30/02)

Career Record: 24-11-1

Notable Wins: Trevor Prangley (*Ultimate Fight Night* 4); Paulo Filho (WEC 36); Yushin Okami (UFC 104); Nate Marquardt (UFC 109)

Notable Losses: Forrest Griffin (IFC: Global Domination); Jeremy Horn (EC 57, SF 6, UFC 60); Renato Sobral (UFC 55); Paulo Filho (WEC 31); Demian Maia (UFC 95); Anderson Silva (UFC 117)

Chael Sonnen's dominant performance against **UFC** middleweight champion **Anderson Silva** at **UFC 117** could serve as a microcosm of his entire career.

Sonnen controlled Silva for 23 minutes, clobbering him with almost 300 punches. Not only did he put Silva on his back in all five rounds, he even managed to knock down the sport's best striker with an improved **boxing** attack. And then, moments away from walking out of the cage with title gold and the biggest upset in UFC history, Sonnen blew it. Silva capitalized on a careless moment and caught Sonnen in a fight-ending **triangle choke**. Silva pulled victory from the jaws of defeat — or so it seemed. To those familiar with Sonnen's career, the opposite was true — Sonnen had once again found a way to lose when winning seemed the only option.

A former all-American at Oregon and an Olympic alternate, Sonnen is a tremendous wrestler. There hasn't been an opponent yet that he couldn't take to the mat with disturbing ease. Once he has the fight where he wants it, Sonnen is relentless. Cardio is no issue: once he has you down he never stops attacking. It's a recipe for success, but Sonnen seems to be missing one key ingredient and it separates him from the greats — mental toughness. When he feels threatened, especially by a submission hold, his instinct is to quit. It's natural: most fighters feel uneasy when a limb is threatened or they risk unconsciousness from a chokehold. But the best fight through it. A survival instinct kicks in and they do whatever they can to escape. Sonnen taps. He lost eight fights by submission, most by way of triangle choke or **arm bar** — holds locked in while Sonnen was in a dominant position.

Against average fighters it hardly matters. Sonnen is so good he's rarely threatened. He earned his shot at Silva by dispatching two super tough opponents, **Yushin Okami** and **Nate Marquardt**, with shocking ease. Despite these big wins, critics didn't give the **Team Quest** star much of a chance against the Spider. It was looking like just another ho-hum Silva title defense when Sonnen turned up the intensity. He went after the champ with a starling ver-

In Their Own Words: Chael Sonnen talks trash at the UFC 115 fan Q & A

"Yeah, when you get [Anderson Silva] down you're not out of the woods yet. But he has a black belt from the Nogueira brothers, which is like getting a toy in your happy meal if you ask me. One of them is a punching bag and the other is really just irrelevant. . . . This is a one-sided dance. I saved Anderson's job. Uncle Dana was going to give him his walking papers, and I begged him, 'Keep him around. Keep him around for one more fight. I will retire this guy.'"

bal attack. For months, Sonnen was everywhere, looking to get under Silva's skin with a series of increasingly insulting tirades that touched on nationality, race, and even Silva's status as one of the sport's best fighters. Chael Sonnen promised to do what many of Silva's previous opponents had been too frightened to do — bring the fight to the champion. He was as good as his word, coming forward, attacking *and* winning. But in the end, all the talk in the world couldn't prevent the inevitable: as Sonnen tapped with less than two minutes left, his fans no doubt felt a familiar pang. A submission loss after a superior performance? That was Sonnen being Sonnen.

Soszynski, Krzysztof

Nickname: The Polish Experiment

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 205-235 lbs

Born: 8/2/77

Debut: 4/17/99

Career Record: 21-10-1

Notable Wins: Alex Andrade (Rinf of Combat 18); Brian Stann (UFC 97); Andre Gusmao (UFC 98); Stephan Bonnar (UFC 110)

Notable Losses: Matt Horwich (Freedom Fight: Canada vs. USA); Ben Rothwell (IFL: 2007 Semi-Finals); Brandon Vera (UFC 102); Stephan Bonnar (UFC 116)

Krzysztof Soszynski started his grappling career in a very different industry. Although **Brock Lesnar** gets all the attention from fans and the media, Soszynski was also a wrestler in another life. Discovered as a massive 318-pound body builder, he was soon hopping around the ring and taking pratfalls all over Canada.

His career path seemed set when he encountered wrestling legend "Bad News" Allen Coage. Bad News Allen was more than a professional wrestler. He was also the 1976 Olympic bronze medalist in **judo**. Coage was the toughest man in a tough man's business. As a black man in a notoriously racist industry, Bad News was continually forced to defend himself from insensitive and downright insulting remarks. Many black wrestlers were content to pretend not to hear the horrible slights on their person and their race. That wasn't Bad News Allen.

In one famous incident, the monstrous Andre the Giant was making racist comments on a bus ride in front of all the other wrestlers. When Coage confronted him, Andre refused to stop. Allen walked to the front of the bus and asked the driver to stop. He stepped outside and challenged the 6' 10", 500-pound Giant to step outside with him. Andre refused. The next day at the hotel, Bad News renewed his challenge. Finally, the Giant backed down and apologized. Even a monster wanted no part of Allen Coage.

In Their Own Words: Soszynski on his wrestling mentor Bad News Allen Coage

"I met him after he had two hip replacement surgeries. He was still on the floor in his fifties, still grappling with the kids he was teaching. I could definitely imagine how tough he was back then and how well he would have done if the sport had been around. He traveled extensively to Japan as well, learning aikido and jiu-jitsu. I had the privilege of meeting him during one of my circuits across Canada. He invited me out for a two-week camp at his place in Calgary and that's where he showed me a **Kimura** and an **arm bar**. I was hooked. Immediately after that two-week training camp, I came back to Winnipeg, quit wrestling, and took up **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**. Six months later I had my first fight. So, he was very instrumental to me turning into a mixed martial arts fighter. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be here. I'd be doing something else."

The fans certainly seem happy about Soszynski's chance encounter with Coage. He's quickly become a favorite because of his aggressive style and his lead role in ***Ultimate Fighter*** shenanigans in the reality show's eighth season. After falling short on the show, Soszynski continued his training under former champion **Dan Henderson** at **Team Quest** in California. He was looking to refine some skills, but Henderson and coaches like Heath Sims have taught him more than wrestling and striking. They've also shown him how to conduct himself outside the cage and helped hone an already keen work ethic.

Sperry, Mario

Nickname: Zen Machine

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 210 lbs

Born: 9/28/66

Debut: Duela De Titas (9/1/95)

Career Record: 13-4

Notable Wins: Vernon White (Caged Combat 1); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 17)

Notable Losses: Murilo Rua (Pride 20); Yuki Kondo (Pride Shockwave 2003); Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (Pride 31)

Growing up in Leblon, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in all of Brazil, fighting was by no means the only career path open to Mario Sperry. His father was an air force officer, and Sperry earned a degree in economics. But like so many of Rio's best **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** practitioners, Sperry eschewed the usual comforts of his class and chose to fight for a living. A **Carlson Gracie**

black belt since 1995, Sperry is an **ADCC** and BJJ world champion, but most notable as a co-founder and leader of **Brazilian Top Team** (BTT) alongside **Murilo Bustamante**. Sperry was never able to match his sport grappling success in the full contact world of MMA, but he definitely had his moments — a first-round win by **arm triangle** choke over the dangerous **Igor Vovchanchyn** in Sperry's **Pride** debut foremost among them. Although the title fights and championships that many of his BTT teammates earned over the years may have eluded Sperry himself, his aggressive attacking, fast-paced approach to ground fighting, and singular work ethic have made Sperry an equally respected figure in the sport.



Spirit MC

From 2003 through 2008, Seoul's Spirit MC was a kind of extremely minor Korean **UFC**. They built their stars with a reality show, the superbly titled *Go! Super-Korean*. They showcased future UFC fighters like **Denis Kang** and **Dong Hyun Kim** on more than one occasion. And they even featured the best referee in the business, **Herb Dean**, albeit in a role North American fans might not immediately recognize him in: professional mixed martial artist (he lost an October 2006 bout by submission to Jungyu Choi). The analogy ends there, though, as Spirit MC bouts were contested not inside the Octagon but in a ring, under rules much more similar to **Pride**: stomps and soccer kicks to the head of a downed opponent were a staple. With no word from the organization on either its immediate or long-term future since its brief association with the now defunct **EliteXC**, there's no telling if or when Spirit MC will again fill

Jang Chung Gymnasium. There's no doubt that the burgeoning Korean MMA scene is poorer for its absence.

Sprawl and brawl

"Sprawl and brawl" is like the twisted cousin of **Mark Coleman's** patented "**ground and pound.**" Both are styles employed by former collegiate and amateur wrestlers, but that's where the comparisons end. Sprawl and brawl is like the Bizarro version of ground and pound. Instead of trying to take an opponent to the mat, these fighters use the skills they've worked so hard on in the **wrestling** room to stay on their feet. The idea was to combat strong grapplers, primarily jiu-jitsu artists with strong submissions, by simply staying away from the floor. Since it was the only place the submission artists could ply their trade, the advantage shifted to the wrestler.

It's a style that only works for a select few grapplers. The men who created the concept and utilized it to win **UFC** gold were both wrestlers who had dynamite in their hands: **Chuck Liddell** and **Jens Pulver**. The two would spend the entire fight doing everything in their ability to stay on their feet — and since both were Division I-A wrestlers this ability was considerable — biding their time and hoping to land that one knockout punch.

It is the combination of two skills (takedown defense and power punching) that make sprawl and brawl work. It's not for everyone — in fact only Pulver, Liddell, and **Dan Henderson** have used it regularly to great success at the highest levels. Other wrestlers have tried this strategy, most notably **Josh Koscheck**, but without power punching the fight becomes a roll of the dice. Without that fight ending power, the bouts become kickboxing contests between two inexperienced grapplers not used to slugging it out — complete crapshoots.

Stand and Wang

B.J. Penn received mixed reviews for his coaching stint on the fifth season of ***The Ultimate Fighter***. Who knows what was real and what was the product of reality show editing, but Penn seemed at times aloof, disengaged. He was never more engaged, though, than when he cornered **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt Andy Wang in a preliminary-round fight against Brandon Melendez. The plan was for Wang to take Melendez to the ground, where he would enjoy a clear advantage over the lanky striker with limited grappling skills. But Wang wasn't there to follow the plan. He was there to "stand and Wang."

"Take him *down*, Wang! Go for the takedown, Wang, let's go!"

"Get that single, Andy!"

“Andy, let’s go with the shot! Set up a shot, Andy!”

“Overhand right, single!”

“I want shots!”

“Why are we punching? Wang?”

“Take him down, Andy!”

“Get that *single*, Andy!”

“Take him down, and then you start to fight. Take him down. Promise?”

Wang promised, but he couldn’t help himself. To Penn’s utter exasperation, Wang never made a genuine effort at taking the fight to the ground, seemingly content to stand firmly on both feet and bang out a unanimous decision loss. And so a term was born: whenever a fighter with superior grappling ability elects to stay on his feet and engage in a kickboxing contest he’s bound to lose, that’s stand and Wang.

“I would like to be remembered for something better,” Wang told internet radio host Bob Carson when asked about his unwitting gift to the mixed martial arts lexicon. “That’s why I’m back now,” he said after a two-year absence from the sport, “so the ‘stand and Wang’ thing will become an asterisk instead of the main footnote beside my name.” Alas, it was not to be. In his very next fight, Wang faced skilled striker Atsuhiko Tsuboi at an Art of War card in Macau, and ProMMA.com was there with the call: “As the fight went into the second round Wang was picked apart with strikes. With his corner yelling to take the fight to the ground, Wang chose to remain standing, taking the fight the distance, and thereby ending the main event in an anti-climactic draw.” Next time, take him down, Wang. Promise.

Stann, Brian

Nickname: All-American

Height: 6’1”

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 9/24/80

Debut: SF 14 (1/6/06)

Career Record: 8-3

Notable Wins: Steve Cantwell (WEC 26); Doug Marshall (WEC 33)

Notable Losses: Steve Cantwell (WEC 35); Krzysztof Soszynski (UFC 97)

Brian Stann is a promoter’s dream come true. He is a legitimate American hero, everything the WWE wanted Hulk Hogan to be. His service in the Marine Corps was bona fide — he wasn’t simply an athlete like **Randy Couture** or **Bobby Lashley**. He was a warrior, holding his ground during an intense battle in Karabilah, Iraq, earning a Silver Star for valor.

A former linebacker at the U.S. Naval Academy, Stann had the complete package. He had athleticism, rugged good looks, and innate toughness. What

he didn't seem to have was submission or takedown defense. After winning six in a row against carefully selected opponents who were likely to keep it standing with the strong striker, he lost two straight. Yet, if anyone can forge victory out of defeat, mount a comeback, and save a floundering career, it will be Brian Stann. As the Marines say: Oorah!

Steroids

Steroid scandals have consumed even sports like baseball, known mostly for slightly overweight men chewing tobacco and scratching themselves, occasionally exerting the effort to swing a stick at a ball. If steroids worked in a sport like that — and there is no question that steroids work — was there any doubt that performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) would also engulf a sport where men bludgeon each other for minutes at a time?

We know MMA has a drug problem. When the state of California began testing every fighter on the card in 2007 they found more abuse in MMA than in **boxing**. During the last eight months of 2007, there were 15 positive steroid tests in 54 MMA cards held in the state. During the same time frame, only two boxers tested positive with a much larger sample size.

It was K-1's mega-event at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum that brought the problem into a stark spotlight. **UFC** pioneer **Royce Gracie** tested positive for Nandrolone, Tim Persey was caught with methamphetamines, and former Detroit Lions star football player Johnnie Morton had Chris Benoit levels of testosterone flowing through his veins.

While baseball and football can survive a drug scandal, MMA is still new enough to be hurt badly by any negative stereotyping. The sport is only recently recovered from a long-term smear campaign headed by politicians looking for an easy target. Painting fighters with broad brushstrokes as steroid-raging meatheads doesn't do anyone any favors, but fighters are still using, consequences be damned. Some in the MMA community estimate that more than half of the world's top fighters are secretly using PEDs, an astounding number that could result in real trouble down the road for a growing sport.

The UFC has been relatively lucky, with a surprisingly low number of positive steroid tests. Since Nevada began testing regularly in 2002 the promotion has, however, seen three of its world champions (**Josh Barnett**, **Tim Sylvia**, and **Sean Sherk**) test positive for steroids, forcing them to be stripped of their titles. Other high profile busts include Gracie, **Kimo Leopoldo**, **Ken Shamrock**, **Vitor Belfort**, and **Nate Marquardt**.

Keep in mind that these drug failures are coming in droves despite a flawed testing system that is relatively easy to beat. The testing programs vary from

state to state, but are almost exclusively relegated to post-event pee tests and possibly a urinalysis when a fighter gets his or her license in the state. That means a fighter knows exactly when a test is coming, allowing them to cycle off the drugs they are using, in plenty of time to beat the test. Additionally, in many states, only a few fighters are tested on each card because of the costs of such tests. The system is merely window dressing. Any real effort to stop drug use in the sport will have to include random year-round testing. And while there has been noise about such rigorous testing from Nevada and California, fighters are safe to use drugs year-round, right up until a couple of weeks before their fight.

Stevenson, Joe

Nickname: Daddy	Height: 5'7"
Weight: 155 lbs	Born: 6/15/82
Debut: ESF: Empire 1 (5/15/99)	Career Record: 31-11
Notable Wins: Luke Cummo (<i>The Ultimate Fighter 2</i> Finale); Yves Edwards (UFC 61); Nate Diaz (<i>The Ultimate Fighter 9</i> Finale)	



In Their Own Words: Joe Stevenson on starting young

"I feel like I'm 47. But honestly, with the correct training and stuff, there's no reason a 47-year-old can't fight. My camps are about peak performance and not killing my body every day. It's about being the best person on that day and . . . being able to rise to the occasion.

"Other than that, yes, it hurts when I wake up sometimes and when it's cold. But most people that are working a nine to five, like when I was doing concrete, you know, back in the day, or when I was running the forklift, I felt the same pain. They're just pains that happen and now that I've learned nutrition a little bit better, it's helped me a lot.

"I'm going to ride this car until the wheels come off. Honestly, it will be a decision that happens when my family wants me home more, and luckily I've been blessed with a great wife and great kids that are very supportive and help me tremendously in my life."

Notable Losses: Jens Pulver (Bas Rutten Invitational 2); Josh Neer (*Ultimate Fight Night* 4); B.J. Penn (UFC 80); Kenny Florian (UFC 91); Diego Sanchez (UFC 95)

If you wonder how Joe Stevenson has more than 40 fights at the tender age of 27, it's because he's been doing this for a long time. For 11 long years he's been fighting in the cage. Do the math; Stevenson got his start when he was just 16. Sixteen. With the consent of his parents, so protective that they wouldn't allow him to play high school football, he was fighting on Indian reservations in California before he graduated from high school. And he was winning.

By the time Stevenson worked free from the **King of the Cage** breeding grounds, where **UFC** fighters often learned their profession before joining the big leagues, he was just 23. Stevenson already had a fully formed game when he was invited to join the second season of *The Ultimate Fighter*. He was the favorite and lived up to that billing, winning the UFC contract by beating an overmatched Jason Von Flue and a game **Luke Cummo**.

After a slow start, losing to the tough Josh Neer, Stevenson dropped down to lightweight and ran off four wins in a row. His win streak, combined with his *TUF* notoriety, earned Stevenson a title shot. At UFC 80, Stevenson finally learned what it felt like to be Luke Cummo or Von Flue. He was overmatched and decimated by an unusually motivated **B.J. Penn**. Penn was looking for the title that had eluded him throughout his storied career: the UFC lightweight title. Penn had failed in two previous attempts, losing to **Jens Pulver** at UFC 35

and fighting to a draw with **Caol Uno** at UFC 41.

The fight was a bloodbath. Stevenson was dropped in the first exchange with a right hand and struggled to survive. Stevenson relied on his vast experience to hold on, but at the end of the round Penn opened up a giant cut with an elbow. He choked Joe out in the second round, both men slippery from Stevenson's blood. It was Stevenson at his peak: good but, as Penn demonstrated, not world-class.

St. Pierre, Georges

Nicknames: GSP, Rush

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 5/19/81

Debut: UCC 7 (1/25/02)

Career Record: 20-2

Notable Wins: Karo Parisyan (UFC 46); Frank Trigg (UFC 54); Sean Sherk (UFC 56); B.J. Penn (UFC 58, UFC 94); Matt Hughes (UFC 65, UFC 79); Matt Serra (UFC 83); Jon Fitch (UFC 87); Thiago Alves (UFC 100)

Notable Losses: Matt Hughes (UFC 50); Matt Serra (UFC 69)

Georges St. Pierre is on top, and there's no telling how long he might stay there. The dominant champion of the deepest division in the sport's premier organization, St. Pierre has achieved unparalleled success; no one has faced the level of competition he has over the course of his career and won with the same kind of regularity. He's done it with a combination of top-notch athleticism; crisp, efficient striking; black-belt level **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**; and MMA-specific **wrestling** skills that put NCAA Division I All-Americans to shame. At only 28 years old, with no unavenged losses, and no credible threats to his welterweight title either inside or outside the **UFC**, all that remains for St. Pierre is to cement his status among the legends of the sport, the true all-time greats.

It all started for St. Pierre as a boy hoping to defend himself against neighborhood bullies by studying the rugged Kyokushin style of **karate** under Jean Couture in the small community of Saint-Isidore, Quebec. After the death of his instructor in 1997, St. Pierre broadened his training to include wrestling, **boxing**, and, inspired by the exploits of **Royce Gracie** in the early days of the UFC, Brazilian Jiu-jitsu. He made his professional debut at the age of 20 for the promotion that would become Montreal's **TKO Major League MMA**, and became a local champion after only the second fight of his career.

A shot in the true major leagues of the sport soon followed. When the 22-year-old St. Pierre stepped into the cage against the 21-year-old **Karo Parisyan** at UFC 46, it was a glimpse of the future of the welterweight division, two

fighters who would become UFC fixtures. St. Pierre proved both the better striker and the better wrestler, and took the unanimous decision in their preliminary bout. Later that same night, two fighters who would figure prominently in St. Pierre's career faced off when lightweight **B.J. Penn** challenged **Matt Hughes** for the welterweight title. Penn floored the champion with a right hand and finished him with a **rear naked choke** while Hughes was still dazed, ending Hughes' title reign of more than two years. Penn was stripped of the welterweight championship soon thereafter for fighting in a rival organization in Japan. The UFC needed an opponent for Matt Hughes to fight for the vacant title. Georges St. Pierre, only two fights into his UFC career, got the call.

He was in way over his head. Although St. Pierre clearly had the technical ability and athleticism to hang with Hughes at that time, he didn't have the composure. St. Pierre was in such awe of his opponent that he couldn't so much as look him in the eye during referee **John McCarthy**'s pre-fight instructions. The two traded takedowns in the opening minutes in an impressive showcase of St. Pierre's wrestling skills. Despite a lack of any serious amateur background, St. Pierre's wrestling had been — as it would be for several years to come — honed by training with the Canadian national team. After fighting his way back to his feet, GSP put Hughes on his heels with a spinning back kick to the ribs that appeared to have the veteran hurt, but Hughes put St. Pierre on his back as the round wound down. It looked like we were in for a long, competitive fight, until St. Pierre attempted a sloppy **Kimura** from **half-guard** with only ten seconds to go, which Hughes expertly turned into an **arm bar** to force the submission with only a single second remaining in the first round.

The road back to title contention a second time around would prove an awful lot tougher. First, there was the madman **Jason Miller**, who smiled and laughed his way through a one-sided beating that lasted the full three rounds. Next **Frank Trigg**, a tough two-time challenger to Hughes' welterweight title, whom St. Pierre blasted through and strangled in the first. From there, it was **Sean Sherk**, who had never been stopped in 30 professional bouts — until St. Pierre pounded him out in the second. Finally, the biggest test of them all: the man who had defeated Hughes and then vanished, B.J. Penn. St. Pierre's meeting with Penn at UFC 58 was not the main event, but it was by far the most anticipated fight of the night. It didn't disappoint, going the distance in a back-and-forth affair that ultimately saw St. Pierre emerge the victor in a split decision that could have just as easily gone the other way. The stage was set for Hughes/St. Pierre II.

This time, with the hero worship and awe completely behind him — “I'm not impressed by your performance,” he famously told Hughes after a pretty damn impressive win over Penn — St. Pierre stepped into the Octagon fo-

In Their Own Words: GSP on his training philosophy

"Philosophy helped me with my fighting. I can show you many examples. It's like war. We've seen it in the past: the country or civilization with the most advanced weapons win the war. Genghis Khan dominated the world during his time because he had a weapon nobody else had. America won World War II with the atomic bomb. Same thing in MMA. I want to have a weapon that nobody else has. That's why I've been traveling a lot. I want to have some techniques, some weapons, so I can win and dominate my sport. That's what I need to have to stay ahead of the game. . . .

"Before I lost to Serra, I was lifting weights by myself because I study kinesiology at the university. I was training by myself pretty much. I thought I knew everything already. After I lost, I decided to work with a specialist, a sports conditioning guy. It's helped me improve dramatically. I became way more explosive and he helps me peak at the right time. Periodization of the training. It's changed everything. It helps me a lot."

cused, resolute. And he lit Matt Hughes up. Hughes was unable to take St. Pierre down, and had no answer for St. Pierre's long jabs and high inside leg kicks — two of which John McCarthy saw as unintentional groin shots, although Hughes later admitted the second kick in particular actually struck nerves in his thigh. In the closing seconds of the opening round, St. Pierre connected with a superman punch (a leaping cross following a feinted rear-leg kick) that put Hughes down and nearly out. Hughes was clearly dazed as he stumbled back to his corner, and wasn't doing much better after a minute's rest. Early in the second, St. Pierre floored Hughes with a head kick and followed up with undefended punches and elbows from **guard** that forced McCarthy to call the match at 1:25 of the second round. **Mike Goldberg** captured the moment perfectly: "Tonight, the future has become the present — Georges St. Pierre is the new welterweight champion."

There was every reason to think the young champion was set to reign over the division for years to come. His first title defense, at any rate, was going to be a walk in the park: **Matt Serra** was next in line for a title shot that few felt he truly deserved. The journeyman Serra had fought only sporadically over the previous few years, and only barely squeaked through a tournament of also-rans on ***The Ultimate Fighter 4: The Comeback***, yet here he was, challenging the man who had just effortlessly dispatched the great Matt

Hughes. Serra stepped into the Octagon an 11-to-one underdog. He left it the new welterweight champion of the world. In the three and a half minutes in between, he'd overcome his serious reach disadvantage to send St. Pierre reeling from a heavy, looping shot that connected just behind the ear and set him staggering. Serra pounced and forced St. Pierre to tap to strikes in one of the most stunning upsets in the history of the sport.

It turns out it was just what St. Pierre needed. "In my career, there have been two great turning points," St. Pierre would later reflect. "The first is when I lost to Matt Hughes and the second is when I lost to Serra. After those losses, I made a lot of changes in my training, my entourage, and everything in my life. I become better after every fight, but after these two losses I became way better. It gave me a little push up." The refocused and re-energized St. Pierre who emerged after the loss to Serra has proven even more impressive than the one who first streaked to the title. He outwrestled four-time NCAA Division I All-American **Josh Koscheck** for three rounds. He tossed Matt Hughes around like a rag doll before forcing him to verbally submit to an arm bar. He put on a positional clinic against Brazilian Jiu-jitsu expert Serra to reclaim his title. And he battered the face of legitimate number-one contender **Jon Fitch** into something out of a horror movie.

The stage was set for a hotly anticipated rematch with B.J. Penn. Although their first match was a back-and-forth affair that ended in a much-discussed split decision, the result this time around was far less ambiguous. St. Pierre wore Penn out in the **clinch** in the early rounds, to the point that the visibly exhausted Penn could do nothing to stop St. Pierre's takedowns as the fight progressed. Penn's usually dangerous guard game was completely nullified by St. Pierre's excellent positional work — and the steady stream of blows he landed to the head of the quickly fading lightweight champ. Penn's corner stopped the one-sided fight after the fourth round. Controversy erupted soon after, when Penn's camp filed a formal complaint to the Nevada State Athletic Commission that Phil Nurse, one of St. Pierre's cornermen, had illegally applied petroleum jelly to St. Pierre's chest and back between rounds. Penn wanted licenses revoked, fines imposed, and the bout ruled no contest, but the NSAC didn't see it that way. The controversy quickly died down, and UFC President **Dana White** expressed no enthusiasm at the prospect of a third fight between the two great champions. The last word in the Georges St. Pierre/B.J. Penn story seems to have been written.

The welterweight division has historically been the sport's deepest, but St. Pierre's dominance is such that it's getting harder for the UFC to generate credible challengers to his title. **Thiago Alves**, a **Muay Thai** striker fighting out of the

highly regarded **American Top Team**, was perhaps the last real threat we'll see for some time. If anyone in the division was going to get the better of St. Pierre standing, it was the dangerous "Pit Bull," whose size and ferocity had earned him eight stoppages in 11 UFC fights. But St. Pierre took him down and dominated him for five rounds — despite tearing his groin in the fourth. It was another incredible performance from a fighter who makes incredible performances seem routine.

St. Pierre continues to split his training time between **Greg Jackson's** Albuquerque, New Mexico, camp and Tristar Gym in Montreal. Rumors of a 2010 contest against UFC middleweight ace **Anderson Silva** persist, although it's unclear whether or not that fight would make sense for either competitor. St. Pierre could move up a weight division and take a run at that title. Or he could continue to clean out the division he has so clearly established as his and his alone. Either way, every fight, every win brings him closer to the title he wants most. "I don't want to fight to be champion anymore because I'm already champion," St. Pierre told the press in late 2008. "I want to fight to become a legend in the sport."

Strikeforce

Even though Strikeforce promoted its first MMA event in 2006, the promotion has years of experience in creating compelling and successful fight shows in President Scott Coker's home state of California. The official U.S. partner of K-1 kickboxing, they've been putting on kickboxing shows since 1985. It's these 25 years of learning the tricks of the trade, figuring out what works in the market, that made Strikeforce the envy of regional promoters everywhere.

Unlike other fledgling groups, Coker's K-1 had no intention of competing with the **UFC** on a national level. They were strictly a regional group, like an old-time **pro wrestling** territory, running shows in San Jose, California, with local talent they knew would draw. The events were spectacular successes, outdrawing even UFC events in California, and included a **Frank Shamrock** and Cesar Gracie grudge match that set the North American attendance record, bringing in 17,465 paying fans in March 2006. Even UFC President **Dana White** was impressed.

"Have you ever heard me say a bad word about Strikeforce?" White asked in 2008. "I wish them all the luck in the world. Strikeforce is a good show. They've been putting on great fights for a long time. That's good. It's a positive thing. Those guys run a real promotion. They don't try to tamper with fights. They don't have fucking goofballs from backyard barbecues trying to fight. It's a good thing."

Today, you'd be hard pressed to hear such kind words from White. When **EliteXC** collapsed in a whirlwind of horrible decisions and controversy, Coker and his partners at Silicon Valley Sports and Entertainment were there to pick up the pieces. The little engine that could, the textbook example of a successful local promoter, was ready to go national. The same day, they announced a deal with Showtime for 16 shows a year, with the option for four more on CBS.

Coker and Strikeforce immediately looked to distinguish themselves from the UFC. The one area the UFC had completely ignored was the flourishing women's MMA scene, and Coker snapped up the hottest star in the game, **Gina Carano**. Coker wasn't going to make women a sideshow; in fact, in a historic first for women's MMA, Carano and **Cristiane "Cyborg" Santos** headlined the Strikeforce card at the HP Pavilion in August 2009. The two women became the first female fighters to be featured in the main event of a major MMA show, and they more than delivered. After being built for more than a year, first by the now defunct EliteXC and then by Strikeforce, the fight was a hot commodity, drawing 13,524 fans, the vast majority of them cheering wildly for Carano.

It was the high point of Strikeforce's run in the national spotlight. Santos beat Carano handily in the first round and Carano left MMA, perhaps permanently, to pursue opportunities in the movie business. But Coker had shown the ability to attract international interest in his shows. Earlier that month, Strikeforce shocked the entire MMA community, swooping in during a failed negotiation between the UFC and the world's top heavyweight fighter, **Fedor Emelianenko**, and signing the Russian to a three-fight deal.

It was enough to get CBS — on the fence after the EliteXC debacle — to commit to airing Strikeforce events on national television. The first event, with Fedor in the main event against undefeated prospect **Brett Rogers**, was scheduled for November 7, 2009, in Chicago, Illinois. Fedor defeated Rogers in a spirited bout. The show was a ratings success, but not a smash hit, peaking at 5.46 million viewers for the main event.

Sudo, Genki

Nickname: Neo Samurai

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 3/8/78

Debut: Extreme Shoot 2 (6/6/98)

Career Record: 16-4-1

Notable Wins: Nate Marquardt (Pancrase: Breakthrough 11); Eric Esch (Dynamite!! 2003); Mike Brown (UFC 47); Royler Gracie (K-1 MMA Romanex)

Notable Losses: Duane Ludwig (UFC 42); Kid Yamamoto (Dynamite!! 2005)



Genki Sudo was a showman. Regardless of what happened in the ring, Sudo always made his biggest impression either before or after the fight. Before the fight, there were elaborately staged entrances, whether he took up Charlie Sheen's "Wild Thing" character from the baseball comedy *Major League* (and did the robot), donned a shiny silver spaceman suit (and did the robot), or paraded out in African tribal garb (and did the robot). There was seemingly no end to the variety and inventiveness of his entrances (minus the robot). Post-fight, the observant Buddhist would do his best to communicate his message of universal peace and love, and insist that "We Are All One." Even during the fight, he'd adopt weird stances and even turn away from his opponents, a strange tactic that never really seemed to cost him like you might think. Genki Sudo was, in short, a character.

He was a fighter, too. With his dynamic submission skills and wins over **Royler Gracie**, **Mike Brown**, and the much bigger **Nate Marquardt**, there was never any doubt about that. After stints in **Pancrase**, the **UFC**, **Rings** and **K-1**, Sudo retired young after a New Year's Eve 2006 win over future **WEC** bantamweight regular Damacio Page. But his last real bout of consequence came a year earlier when he was stopped by **Kid Yamamoto** in their **Hero's**

tournament final. Many thought the match was stopped early, but at the post-fight press conference, the always chill Sudo didn't particularly seem to mind. Since then, Genki has just kept on being Genki. He's been acting, recording ("Love and Everything" and "World Order" are his standout tracks to date), and every now and then he turns up at **Dream** events as a color commentator.

SuperBrawl

Hawaii's leading MMA show started in 1995, as far removed from the 8,800-seat Blaisdell Arena it would later call home as one could possibly imagine. Former Chippendales dancer T. Jay Thompson originally called the event FutureBrawl, and the fights in the crowd were often more compelling than the ones in the ring. The shows were held at the legendarily violent Gussie L'Amour's in Honolulu, a club where soldiers from the local military base would often clash heads with local tough guys. The smarter fans in the audience had an empty beer bottle at the ready and their chair in hand, ready to throw if it came time to throw down.

Just a year later the show, renamed SuperBrawl, was a top breeding ground for MMA's larger promotions worldwide. In the days before six-figure contracts, Thompson could get many of the sport's rising stars on his shows with the simple promise of a Hawaiian vacation. **Pat Miletich**, **Frank Shamrock**, **Pete Williams**, **Vitor Belfort**, **Rumina Sato**, and **Matt Hughes** all had fights with SuperBrawl, and top Hawaiian prospects like **Wesley Correia** and Ronald Jhun also cut their teeth there. In 2005 the promotion was rechristened Icon Sport and continued to combine established international-level talents like **Robbie Lawler** and **Jason Miller** with native prospects like Kala Hose. After 12 years of promoting MMA on the islands, Thompson sold Icon Sport to Pro Elite in September 2007. As part of the sale, Thompson took a position with the doomed **EliteXC** promotion as a consultant. When EliteXC folded, Thompson re-emerged on the Hawaiian scene with Kingdom MMA.

Suzuki, Minoru

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 195 lbs

Born: 6/17/68

Debut: Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1 (9/21/93)

Career Record: 28-20-1

Notable Wins: Ken Shamrock (Pancrase: Pancrash! 1, Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 4); Maurice Smith (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 1); Matt Hume (Pancrase: King of Pancrase Tournament); Guy Mezger (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 7); Jushin Liger (Pancrase: Spirit 8)

Notable Losses: Maurice Smith (Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 3); Bas Rutten (Pancrase: Road to the Championships 2, Pancrase: 1995 Anniversary Show); Masakatsu Funaki (Pancrase: Road to the Championships 5); Frank Shamrock (Pancrase: Eyes of Beast 3); Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: Truth 6); Semmy Schilt (Pancrase: Advance 1); Sanae Kikuta (Pancrase: Breakthrough 11); Denis Kang (Pancrase: 2000 Anniversary Show)

Minoru Suzuki was **Pancrase's** bad boy. He dressed in black, wore a black towel over his head, and walked to the ring with a purpose. Behind the scenes, he brutalized students and was notoriously distant from the foreign talent. Inside the ring he went all-out too, mixing aggressive standup and great amateur **wrestling**. Trained by Yoshiaki Fujiwara, Suzuki also had excellent submissions, making him one of the first cross-trained fighters in the history of the sport.

Suzuki was the first fighter to beat **UFC** Hall of Famer **Ken Shamrock** under Pancrase rules. It was a fight rumored to be fixed, a bout between two pro wrestlers who understood business. Shamrock had lost to **Royce Gracie** at **UFC 1** and the Japanese promotion was afraid of their best fighter losing again in the Octagon. Shamrock tapped out to a **knee bar** and Suzuki was immediately propelled into the main event stratosphere. If Shamrock was losing, it was going to be to someone in their own promotion.

It happened again more than a year later. Shamrock, who had become the King of Pancrase, was facing fellow pro wrestler **Dan Severn** at **UFC 6**. Severn was an opening match wrestler for a competing promotion in Japan. There was a good chance that he would beat Shamrock, a potentially embarrassing turn of events for Pancrase. Shamrock agreed to drop his championship to Suzuki, again tapping out to a knee bar.

Just two years into his MMA career, Suzuki had already begun a steep decline. He fought 22 times, almost monthly, and trained almost constantly between bouts. Suzuki and the other Pancrase founders pushed themselves too hard, fighting too often, and their bodies couldn't handle the strain. In the next two years Suzuki, who had been winning regularly, lost eight of 11 matches.

By 1998, Suzuki was simply a shell of the fighter who had once inspired terror. He was knocked out so regularly that he was unable to stand up to the force of even mild blows to the head. Soon Pancrase was pushing Suzuki into grappling only matches, homages to the **catch wrestling** that had inspired the promotion's creation.

In 2003, Suzuki returned to traditional **pro wrestling**, becoming one of the hottest wrestlers in the business. He eventually became the All Japan Triple

Crown Champion and remains one of the top performers in Japan, excelling at the sport of excess he had eschewed ten years before.

Sylvia, Tim

Nickname: The Maine-iac

Height: 6'8"

Weight: 265 lbs

Born: 3/5/76

Debut: IFC: Battleground 2001 (1/19/01)

Career Record: 26-6

Notable Wins: Ricco Rodriguez (UFC 41); Andrei Arlovski (UFC 59, UFC 61)

Notable Losses: Frank Mir (UFC 46); Andrei Arlovski (UFC 51); Randy Couture (UFC 68); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (UFC 81); Fedor Emelianenko (Affliction: Banned)

Poor Tim Sylvia. He just wants to be loved, adored by fans, and respected by his peers. Instead, he's MMA's least popular fighter. Sylvia didn't have the prototypical jock's life growing up. He was awkward, clumsy, and picked on by his classmates. The result was a man desperate to make it, and then tell everyone about it.

Sylvia is his own worst enemy. Once, his agent **Monte Cox** secured him a big sponsorship, Sylvia, Cox, and the sponsor went out to celebrate. At the end of the evening, the sponsors rescinded their offer. Sylvia couldn't rein in his attitude long enough to impress someone interested in giving him money. "I can't do it," the sponsor said. "This guy is an asshole."

It's a shame that Sylvia has such a large chip on his shoulder, because his story should inspire. He overcame poor genetics and limited athleticism to become the **UFC** heavyweight champion. When he first arrived at **Pat Miletich's** gym in Iowa he was almost useless. No one thought he would make it. Through hard work, and his sheer size, he continued to develop and win.

After 13 victories in a row, he made his **UFC** debut against **Wesley "Cabbage" Correia**. Cabbage had the reputation of being unstoppable, so granite-chinned that he would never be out of a fight. Sylvia became the first to punch his ticket and, in turn, earned a shot at **Ricco Rodriguez's** heavyweight title. Rodriguez's life and fighting career were spiraling out of control, and Sylvia dispatched him in the first round.

The new champion's first title defense was a fiasco. He beat challenger Gan McGee handily, but after the fight he tested positive for the **steroid** Stanozolol and was forced to vacate his title. Sylvia claimed the drug use wasn't to achieve an athletic advantage, but rather to improve his doughy physique. With any other fighter, fans and the media would be skeptical of that claim. From Sylvia, however, it seemed plausible. He was that anxious to impress.



Upon his return from a six-month suspension, Sylvia fought **Frank Mir** to regain his title. Mir handed him his first professional loss with a gruesome **arm bar** finisher. Initially fans didn't understand why the fight had been stopped. Even UFC President **Dana White** was up in arms about what he thought was a poor decision by referee **Herb Dean**. Then they showed the replay on the big screen and the crowd was silent. It was clear that Mir had broken Sylvia's arm with the hold.

Sylvia got a third chance at the championship at UFC 51 against the sensational **Andrei Arlovski**. Arlovski dropped Sylvia with a punch and finished him with an Achilles lock in the first 50 seconds. Even though he went on to regain the title from Arlovski at UFC 59, Sylvia was never the same fighter after this loss. The aggressive warrior who once finished 16 of his first 18 fights became a cautious jabber, using his reach to do just enough to win. Five of his next seven UFC contests went to the judges' score cards, causing Sylvia to gain a reputation for boring fights.

It was this reputation for lackluster performances that made the UFC decide it no longer needed his services following a loss to **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira** at UFC 81. The fans hated Sylvia and his constant backroom bickering over money was growing tiresome in the **Zuffa** front office.

In Their Own Words: Tim Sylvia on not getting respect

"I think . . . the true fans and the people that are knowledgeable about the sport respect me. You got your average bozos that don't know anything about the sport, who see **Brock Lesnar** coming in or see these superstars like **Kimbo Slice**, who really haven't done anything, and they think they are studs. I don't know; I'm always so big and a lot of people don't like me because I'm the biggest guy in the division. So they are always pulling for the underdog.

"I always perform best when I'm in the underdog role. When I'm favored, I usually end up losing. So it's a good spot for me to be in. I like it. I have this thing where I like proving people wrong my whole life. This is just another opportunity I get to do that and basically I get to stick it to the man."

Sylvia landed on his feet, thanks to Cox's connections in the industry, securing a title shot for the newly created WAMMA heavyweight title. His fight with the legendary **Fedor Emelianenko** was the main event of the T-shirt company **Affliction**'s first pay-per-view show. Fedor was fighting for the first time in front of a significant American audience and wasted little time impressing them. He knocked down Sylvia with a punch — recalling shades of the Arlovski fight — and then choked him out in just 36 seconds.

The quick loss badly damaged Sylvia's stock and made finding a fight for the money he demanded unlikely. He took a **boxing** match with 48-year-old Olympic gold medalist **Ray Mercer** that had to be converted to an MMA fight at the zero hour after the Association of Boxing Commissions put a stop to it. It was a black eye for MMA when the inexperienced Mercer knocked Sylvia out in just ten seconds. When Sylvia toppled like a giant redwood tree, his entire career seemed down for the count.



Tadeu, Eugenio

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 160 lbs

Born: 1965

Debut: JJ vs. MA (11/30/84)

Career Record: 3-3-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Loss: Mikey Burnett (UFC 16)

Before **Kazushi Sakuraba** came around, Eugenio Tadeu was the Gracie family's greatest modern rival. Unchallenged for years as the toughest men in Rio de Janeiro, no one quite knew what to do when Tadeu and a new generation of **Luta Livre** artists refused to cede ground. Tadeu wanted nothing more than to test himself against the best. When there was trouble between the two camps, whether it be a street fight or a dojo challenge, you could count on Tadeu to be right in the middle of it.

Every official or semi-official fight between Tadeu and a Gracie fighter seemed to end in an unsatisfying manner. Against **Royler Gracie** in a gym challenge, the fight was declared a draw after both men had given their all. No winner was chosen, although it seemed to many onlookers that Tadeu had carried the day. In 1991, during the famous Desafio Challenge, Tadeu fought **Carlson Gracie** student Wallid Ismail. Ismail was attempting some **ground and pound** next to the ropes and the two men tumbled dangerously to the floor. Fans immediately surrounded them and Ismail took the opportunity to throw a couple of cheap shots on the floor. In a moment straight out of **pro wrestling**, Tadeu was counted out of the ring and given a very questionable loss.

Of course the most famous and bizarre finish in Tadeu (or anyone's) career was at **Pentagon Combat** in 1997. After 15 grueling minutes, Tadeu and **Renzo Gracie** were both exhausted, hoping against hope that the other would finally give in to fatigue. Then the lights went out, the crowd rioted, and the fight was called a no contest. When it was called, it seemed Tadeu had finally gotten the upper hand.

All of this served to make Eugenio Tadeu a legendary figure in the early years of MMA. When he finally got a chance at the Octagon, five years after the debut of the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, Tadeu proved to be worth the wait. He and the **Lion's Den's** Mikey Burnett went toe-to-toe for almost ten minutes before the referee called a stop to the fight. UFC matchmaker **John Perretti** called it the best fight he had seen in the UFC, a fitting tribute to one of the sport's pre-MMA legends.

Takada, Nobuhiko

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 225 lbs

Born: 4/12/62

Debut: Pride 1 (10/11/97)

Career Record: 2-6-2

Notable Win: Mark Coleman (Pride 5)

Notable Losses: Rickson Gracie (Pride 1, Pride 4); Mark Kerr (Pride 6); Royce Gracie (Pride Grand Prix 2000); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 11); Kiyoshi Tamura (Pride 23)

Nobuhiko Takada wanted a fight with **Rickson Gracie**, but he didn't want it like that. Alone in the ring at **Pride 1**, Takada was where he had no intention of being just two years earlier. As the top wrestler in the shoot-style **UWF** wrestling promotion, Takada was always looking for opponents to give his brand of realistic wrestling an edge. Amateur wrestling stars like Gary Albright and Duane Koslowski, ultimate fighters like **Dan Severn**, and judoka like "Bad News" Allen Coage gave the promotion credibility. And after his star turn at **Vale Tudo** Japan 1994, Takada wanted to add Rickson Gracie to the list.

MMA was taking off in Japan. The fans had seen **Pancrase**, the **UFC**, and real Brazilian-style **Vale Tudo**. The whispers were beginning to start: the **UWF** wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Looking to head that off at the pass, the company made a huge offer to Gracie to come in and split a pair of matches with Takada. The proud fighter declined.

If Gracie wouldn't come to them, they would come to Gracie. Takada and **UWF** matchmaker Yukoh Miyato sent their toughest guy, **Yoji Anjo**, to embarrass Gracie in his California dojo. Instead Gracie beat Anjo bloody. The **UWF** was shell-shocked, and shoot-style wrestling's demise came a little faster than it otherwise might have.

After a crushing series of inter-promotional matches with wrestlers from New Japan Pro Wrestling, traditional wrestling showmen, Takada was at a career crossroads. He could either return to **pro wrestling** as a diminished star or try his hand at this new sport that in a very real sense his wrestling had inspired.

Pride was built specifically to showcase Takada. There was little doubt who his first opponent would be. Japanese culture dictated that Takada had

a responsibility to stand up for his protégé Anjo. It was necessary for him to challenge Rickson Gracie.

When the fight finally happened on October 11, 1997, Takada's remarkably poor performance shocked fans. He had been built for years as the toughest man in professional wrestling. Where were his kicks that allegedly struck blows more powerful than a man swinging a baseball bat? Where were his vaunted submissions? Gracie submitted him easily with an **arm bar** in less than five minutes.

Takada's reputation died that night at the Tokyo Dome. He came back in a worked match against Kyle Sturgeon, but showed little improvement in a rematch with Gracie at Pride 4. By this point, Takada was a shell of the athlete who had dominated pro wrestling in the 1990s. He had been wrestling professionally for 17 years and his body simply wouldn't work with him anymore. He seemed perpetually stiff, almost as if he was unable to move, a malady that hurt his performance in the ring.

After the second loss to Gracie, Pride allegedly paid off former UFC champion **Mark Coleman** to take a dive. Coleman needed the money and, after a losing streak had ended his UFC career, was looking for a new fighting home. Even this win did little to rehabilitate Takada's reputation. Yet, despite his limited skills, you can't say the man didn't have courage. He fought the best guys of his generation, from uber-wrestler **Mark Kerr**, to the ground wizard **Royce Gracie**, to the fearsome Russian wrecking ball **Igor Vovchanchyn**.

He lost them all, but it never seemed to faze him. He'd be back again and again, realizing that even though the fights were hopeless, the promotion needed his presence on the card to sell tickets. Finally, at the age of 40, Takada was ready to call it quits.

His last match was with one of his students, the amazing **Kiyoshi Tamura**. Tamura was a professional wrestling savant but, unlike Takada, one who had



taken well to real fighting. He knocked Takada out in the second round. With tears in his eyes, he embraced his teacher and with that, Nobuhiko Takada's MMA career had as memorable an end as it did a beginning.

Takahashi, Yoshiki

Real Name: Kazuo Takahashi

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 205-225 lbs

Born: 3/13/69

Debut: Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1 (9/21/93)

Career Record: 28-24-4

Notable Wins: Wallid Ismail (UFC 12); Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase Anniversary Show 1998)

Notable Losses: Ken Shamrock (Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 2); Bas Rutten (Pancrase: Road to the Championship 1); Josh Barnett (New Japan Pro Wrestling: Ultimate Crush 2003)

Yoshiki Takahashi was a stranger in a strange land. Among the Japanese wrestlers who formed the **Pancrase** promotion in 1993, Takahashi was the only one who wasn't a slick and technical grappler. Takahashi was a straight up bar brawler, plowing forward until someone fell down. Usually it was him, but fans didn't seem to mind. He quickly became a crowd favorite (and one of **Ken Shamrock's** preferred training partners) because of his courage and fighting spirit.

Takahashi was able to get almost everyone in the early years of Pancrase to engage with him in his fight — at least for a while, before they usually finished him off. Even the stoic **Masakatsu Funaki**, the Pancrase founder who preferred to do his work on the mat, went toe-to-toe with Takahashi in a memorable slugfest in 1994. Funaki won handily, one of many big name opponents to run over the Japanese punching bag in his 15-year career. Takahashi's list of opponents reads like a who's who of MMA (including Ken Shamrock, **Bas Rutten**, **Guy Mezger**, Semmy Schilt, **Josh Barnett**, **Heath Herring**, and **Igor Vovchanchyn**). They all beat him, but that's okay. The world of sports needs noble and valiant losers too. They help the heroes shine brighter.

Takase, Daiju

Height: 6'0"

Weight: 183 lbs

Born: 4/20/78

Debut: Pride 3 (6/24/98)

Career Record: 7-13-1

Notable Wins: Anderson Silva (Pride 26); Carlos Newton (Pride Bushido 3)

Notable Losses: Jeremy Horn (UFC 21); Nate Marquardt (Pancrase: Trans 4); Hayato Sakurai (Pride Shockwave 2003)

Daiju Takase bears the ignoble distinction of having been awarded the first yellow card for inactivity in the history of **Pride**. In his MMA debut, Takase found himself in the unenviable position of being outweighed by over 400 pounds by his opponent Emmanuel Yarborough, whom early **UFC** fans best remember as the poor soul on the wrong end of **Keith Hackney**'s White Tiger Kenpo fury. Whereas Hackney's approach to Yarborough had been to come right at the big man, Takase's was subtly but importantly different: he ran away. An historic yellow card and minutes that felt like years later, Takase attempted a takedown, and in the ensuing scramble, an overwhelmed Yarborough tapped to strikes.

Revisiting that match years later, it's strange to think that Daiju Takase, running and somersaulting away from an exhausted morbidly obese man, would go on to be one of only two fighters to finish top pound-for-pounder **Anderson Silva**. Silva's flying scissors **heel hook** loss to **Ryo Chonan** is often dismissed as a fluke (despite the fact that Chonan was more than holding his own against "The Spider"), but there's no way around the fact that Takase schooled Silva from the moment their fight hit the ground. Takase came out tentative, but managed an ugly takedown after several poor attempts. Once on the mat, Takase pressured his opponent relentlessly, and threatened submissions consistently for the better part of eight minutes. A reverse **triangle choke** looked dangerous; a **Kimura** looked worse. When Takase finally secured a triangle from the top and rolled on to his back to finish the choke, he seemed as surprised as anyone to have beaten the heavily favored Silva. Never before and never since has Silva looked so out of his league.

And this to the journeyman Takase, who trained with quality fighters throughout his career — **Kazushi Sakuraba**, **Genki Sudo**, **Hidehiko Yoshida**, **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka** — but never had another notable win to speak of, aside from besting a **Carlos Newton** who had long since seen better days. MMA is strange like that, and it's never been stranger than when Daiju Takase, of all people, dominated Anderson Silva.

Takayama, Yoshihiro

Height: 6'5"

Weight: 253 lbs

Born: 9/19/66

Debut: Pride 14 (5/27/01)

Career Record: 0-4

Notable Losses: Kazuyuki Fujita (Pride 14); Semmy Schilt (Pride 18); Don Frye (Pride 21); Bob Sapp (Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye 2002)

Yoshihiro Takayama is awful, but that never stopped him from being awesome — not for a single moment of his gloriously inglorious MMA career.

Takayama got his start in the shoot-style **professional wrestling** outfit Union of Wrestling Forces International (UWFi) alongside such key figures in the development of Japanese mixed martial arts as **Nobuhiko Takada**, **Kazushi Sakuraba**, and **Kiyoshi Tamura**. The UWFi claimed to present legitimate contests, and, at its best, it almost looked that way. But being skilled in convincingly pretending to fight is no substitute for the real thing, as Takayama learned while being pounded and choked into unconsciousness by **Kazuyuki Fujita**, knocked out in the first round by Semmy Schilt, and somehow managing to lose by **arm bar** to **Bob Sapp**. Unlike some of his UWFi peers, he never amounted to much of a legitimate fighter, but Takayama could take a beating. Never was this more apparent than when Takayama faced off with **Don Frye** at **Pride 21** in the fiercest brawl in the history of the sport. Yoshihiro Takayama was never pretty, but by the end of an ugly MMA career, he was a hell of a lot uglier.

Taktarov, Oleg

Nickname: The Russian Bear

Height: 6'

Weight: 215 lbs

Born: 8/26/67

Debut: White Dragon (10/22/93)

Career Record: 16-5-2

Notable Wins: Tank Abbott (UFC 6); Marco Ruas (Ultimate Ultimate 95); Mark Kerr (Yamma Pit Fighting)

Notable Losses: Dan Severn (UFC 5, Ultimate Ultimate 95); Renzo Gracie (Martial Arts Reality Superfight); Gary Goodridge (Pride 1)

If Oleg Taktarov is ever forgotten — and with only a handful of major wins in his brief career he just may be — one hopes his rolling **knee bar** stands the test of time. We saw it first at Ultimate Ultimate 1995 against greased-up Canadian wrestler **Dave Beneteau**. Taktarov was looking for a **judo** throw but couldn't get a good grasp on the slippery Canadian. Instead, he dropped to the ground, positioning one of Beneteau's legs between his own and executing a nifty forward roll. After that, his body was a fulcrum and his opponent's a lever. It was just pure science. Although the wrestler managed to escape the knee bar, Taktarov segued beautifully to the Achilles lock for the win. It was, at the time, the most advanced grappling technique ever seen in the **UFC** Octagon.

Oleg Taktarov was a blue-eyed assassin, a counter-terrorist instructor from the mountains of Russia. A **sambo** champion, Taktarov thought the UFC would be right up his alley. He traveled across the world, to the Russian section of Los Angeles where his lack of English would be less of a detriment. Near starving, he was given a chance by UFC matchmaker **Art Davie**, in part Davie says because **Rorion Gracie** was so adamant they not use him. Smelling a rat,

Davie thought Taktarov must be pretty good indeed if he was intimidating even the Gracie brothers.

He got a shot at UFC 5 where **Dan Severn** mercilessly beat him, opening a gaping wound on the Russian's head. Trainer Gokor Chivichyan threw in the towel. Taktarov looked good enough to earn a second chance. This time **Ken Shamrock's Lion's Den** adopted him. He and Ken had some legendarily brutal sessions, fighting bare-knuckle right up until a week before UFC 6 where Shamrock had a superfight with Severn.

While the win over Beneteau was an artistic masterpiece, his win in the finals of the eight-man tournament at UFC 6 over **Tank Abbott** was a display of grit and heart for the ages. The show was in Casper, Wyoming, in the thin mountain air. After two fights, both men were already tired. Almost 18 minutes later, they were the walking dead. But Taktarov, the expressionless Russian soldier, had just a little bit more will to win than Abbott, securing a **rear naked choke** in the UFC's most dramatic match ever. Post-fight, Taktarov was administered oxygen, but what he really needed was fluids. He was eventually hospitalized and given an IV. Abbott would brag that he was at the after-party while his opponent was in the hospital. That might have been true, but Taktarov still took home the winner's purse.

Taktarov drew Shamrock in a lackluster superfight and lost a rematch to Severn in the finals of the Ultimate Ultimate. He tried his rolling **leg lock** again, but Severn was strong enough to pull away, eventually winning an unanimous decision. Other high profile knockout losses, to **Renzo Gracie** and **Gary Goodridge**, sent Taktarov looking for a new path.

He found a niche onscreen, playing a Russian villain in a variety of Hollywood movies and television shows. His most critically acclaimed performance was in the Robert De Niro vehicle *15 Minutes*, where Taktarov starred as the lead villain, Oleg Razgul.

In 2007, ten years after his last major fight in **Pride**, Taktarov returned to the ring for BodogFight. That fight was just a warm-up for his "Master's Fight" with another aging superstar, fellow UFC tournament champion **Mark Kerr**. Taktarov dismantled Kerr in the main event of the debut (and final) **Yamma Pit Fighting** card. With his movie career going strong in his native Russia, and his age creeping past 40, Taktarov's MMA career is likely over. One can only hope Taktarov joins the early pioneers he spilled blood with, Severn and Shamrock, in the UFC Hall of Fame.

Tamura, Kiyoshi

Height: 5'11"

Born: 12/17/69

Weight: 185-205 lbs

Debut: K-1 Hercules 95 (12/9/95)

Career Record: 17-11-1

Notable Wins: Patrick Smith (K-1 Hercules 95); Dave Menne (Rings: King of Kings 99 Block B); Renzo Gracie (Rings: King of Kings 99 Finals); Pat Miletich (Rings: Millennium Combine 3); Nobuhiko Takada (Pride 23); Masakatsu Funaki (Dream 2); Kazushi Sakuraba (Dynamite!! 2008)

Notable Losses: Renato Sobral (Rings: King of Kings 99 Finals); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Rings: King of Kings 2000 Block A); Wanderlei Silva (Pride 19); Bob Sapp (Pride 21); Hidehiko Yoshida (Pride: Total Elimination 2003)

Kiyoshi Tamura is, in many people's estimation, the best shoot-style professional wrestler of all time. His bouts with **Volk Han** and **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka** set a new standard of excellence and he walked closer to the line between real and fake than any man before or since.

With his good looks, perhaps amplified by his trademark skin-tight banana hammock red Speedos, Tamura was a favorite of female fans. He was perfect as a supporting player, the man who came on just before the main event. In the UWF, he set the stage for **Nobuhiko Takada** on top. When the UWF folded, he moved to **Rings** to fill the same role for **Akira Maeda**.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Tamura was actually an excellent shooter. He had fast and powerful kicks (**Frank Shamrock** called them the hardest he had ever felt) to go along with solid grappling skills. He was a good fighter, not a great one, but decision makers in Rings weren't able to tell the difference. When the company made the decision to go to all legitimate bouts in 1999 after Maeda's retirement, Tamura was chosen to be the new leading man. He wasn't up to the challenge.

His first legitimate match in Rings was an upset loss to Valentijn Overeem. While Tamura rebounded to win several big fights in his Rings career, including decisions over **Renzo Gracie** and former **UFC** champions **Pat Miletich** and **Dave Menne**, he never recovered from his loss of stature in the eyes of the fans.

In 2001 Tamura jumped to **Pride** for several mega-matchups. He was knocked out by the vicious **Wanderlei Silva** and was a fed to the monstrous **Bob Sapp**, a fighter who outweighed Tamura by almost 200 pounds. Then Pride gave the fans what they really wanted.

In Japan, bouts were often between foreigners (called gaijin) and native Japanese. For the most part, the top Japanese fighters didn't compete with each other. This had been the pattern for many years within Japanese **professional wrestling** and the school of thought had dominated MMA match-making as well. But fans were demanding the answer to a question they had been thinking about for years: who was really the toughest wrestler in the UWF?

To answer that question, Pride convinced Tamura to step into the ring with his mentor Takada in the legend's final match. Fans crowded the Tokyo Dome to see the two wrestlers do battle. The fight was actually left off the American pay-per-view broadcast, but in Japan, it was the match that packed the building. Tamura, to the surprise of no one, knocked Takada out with right hook, then dropped to his knees as the emotion overcame him.

It was a great moment and with it, Tamura had found his role in the company. The major matches in his career from that point forward were with other high profile Japanese. He split a pair of matches with Olympic gold medalist judoka **Hidehiko Yoshida** and Makoto Takimoto. Those fights set the stage for two final dream matches.

He beat fellow UWF alumnus **Masakatsu Funaki** at **Dream 2**, overwhelming him with a series of right hands before finishing with a flurry of **ground and pound**. Then came the fight fans had been demanding for nearly a decade. **Kazushi Sakuraba** had undoubtedly been the best of the former shoot-style wrestlers. In his prime, he was widely considered the best fighter in the world. Hard-core fans badly wanted to see him in the ring against Tamura, generally considered the second-best Japanese fighter of that era — but Tamura resisted.

It was rumored that when Tamura was an established star in the UWF, he mistreated a young Sakuraba. Such abuse was fairly common practice in the Japanese wrestling industry, but the victims rarely had an opportunity to settle matters in the ring. When the fight finally happened, it was a huge disappointment. Sakuraba was a shell of himself and the promised grudge match fireworks fizzled when Tamura employed a defensive strategy to win a boring decision. Now 40 years old, it may have been the final fight of a long career. Age and injuries wear on any man, and Tamura has been involved in the industry for 20 years. No doubt he will be back, though, waiting for a young Japanese star to dethrone him as the king of the professional wrestlers.

Tanner, Evan

Height: 6'

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 2/11/71

Debut: USWF 4 (4/12/97)

Career Record: 32-8

Notable Wins: Paul Buentello (USWF 4); Heath Herring (USWF 7); Ikuhisa Minowa (Pancrase: 1998 Neo-Blood Tournament Round 1); Phil Baroni (UFC 45, UFC 48); David Terrell (UFC 51)

Notable Losses: Heath Herring (PSDA); Tito Ortiz (UFC 30); Rich Franklin (UFC 42, UFC 53); David Loiseau (*Ultimate Fight Night 2*); Yushin Okami (UFC 82); Kendall Grove (*Ultimate Fight Night 7*)



“I always thought of myself as the poet, the writer, or the philosopher — I never thought of myself as a fighter,” Evan Tanner once said. “But here I am.” Tanner was a traveler by nature, an adventurer, and his mixed martial arts career wasn’t the realization of a long-held dream; it was just another experience to add to the collection. A two-time Texas state champion wrestler, Tanner taught himself the basics of **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** working from old Gracie family instructional tapes, and found success on the local level working with those rudiments. That success followed him all the way to Japan, where he won the **Pancrase** Neo-Blood tournament in 1998. On the strength of that showing, Tanner earned an appearance at **UFC 18**, and over the course of 17 fights in the organization, he would challenge for both the light heavyweight and middleweight titles. He became middleweight champion when he

stopped David Terrell in the first round at **UFC 51**, only to lose it in a grueling contest against **Rich Franklin** in his next fight.

A year later, Tanner was gone from the **UFC**, not because he was no longer competitive, but because of chaos in his personal life. Tanner’s very public problems with alcohol got the best of him throughout 2007, when fans became accustomed to reading revealing and often uncomfortably personal posts on Tanner’s blog detailing his struggles and his strange aborted plan to set up his house as a training camp for underprivileged young men from difficult circumstances. But Tanner’s own personal circumstances were bad and getting worse, as he lost much of what he had to the bottle. He returned to the **UFC** in 2008 but was knocked out by a **Yushin Okami** knee, and dropped a close decision to Kendall Grove in what would turn out to be his last fight.

In Their Own Words: from Evan Tanner's blog, August 27, 2008

"It seems some MMA Web sites have reported on the story, posting up that I might die out in the desert, or that it might be my greatest opponent yet, etc. Come on, guys. It's really common down in southern California to go out to the off-road recreation areas in the desert about an hour away from L.A. and San Diego. So my plan is to go out to the desert, do some camping, ride the motorcycle, and shoot some guns. Sounds like a lot of fun to me. A lot of people do it. This isn't a version of *Into the Wild*."

In the summer of 2008, Tanner began writing with great anticipation about a desert camping trip he was planning. The harsh conditions he was setting out to face alone caused no small degree of worry among his readers but Tanner, ever independent, dismissed their concerns and embarked on what would turn out to be his last adventure. Tanner was found dead of heat exposure September 8.

Tapout

It's easy to deride the truly hideous Tapout clothing aesthetic, or make light of the goofy public personas of Charles "Mask" Lewis, Timothy "Skyscraper" Katz, or Dan "Punkass" Caldwell. Recall, if you dare, Lewis's profoundly embarrassing **Chuck Liddell** introduction at **UFC 43**, in which he perplexing referred to the light heavyweight contender as "intolerant." But love it or hate it, the company Lewis and Caldwell founded in 1997 has grown from a couple of guys selling T-shirts out of the trunk of their car to a global brand, complete with a reality television series, a monthly magazine, and annual sales

In Their Own Words: Charles "Mask" Lewis's UFC 43 introduction for Chuck Liddell

"Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I'm Mask, from the notorious Tapout crew. Is it me, or is it getting cold in here? [giggles] Who's in the house? The Iceman's in the house. I'm talking about Chuck Liddell. A professional killer. An assassin. Aggressive. Intolerant. Unrelenting. Tenacious. Can ya feel me? *Can . . . ya feel . . . me?* You wanna step to the Iceman? You're gonna get knocked out [maniacal laughter]."

in excess of \$100 million. Along the way, the Tapout crew stayed unfailingly true to the grassroots of the sport, sponsoring fighters, offering vital financial support, and maintaining their legitimacy with the hard-core MMA fan base while going lucratively mainstream at the same time. Tragedy struck the team in March 2009, however, when Lewis was killed by a driver later charged with gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated. Lewis was posthumously inducted into the UFC Hall of Fame later that year.

Team Quest

The legendary fight team from Gresham, Oregon, started with three old wrestling buddies looking for a place to train. **Matt Lindland**, **Dan Henderson**, and **Randy Couture** were all on the same U.S. Greco-Roman wrestling team in 1997, forging a bond that lasts to this day. When the three all ended up in cage fighting, a partnership seemed natural and the Team Quest Fight Club was born in 1999. Joining the three champion wrestlers was coach Robert Follis. Team Quest started in the back of a car dealership Lindland bought after returning from the 1996 Olympic Games. The wrestlers didn't see the ramshackle train-



ing grounds as a place for potential profit. Follis thought otherwise and was soon helping run the business, creating a gym with more than 100 members. He also found he had a knack for training fighters. With just a year and a half head start on his pupils, Follis became their jiu-jitsu and grappling coach, as well as a strategist and corner man. Follis believed too many fighters concentrated on what their opponents did well. He focused his fighters instead on how to disrupt an opponent's game plan and make him fight on their turf.

The team's success is unquestionable. Couture and

In Their Own Words: Matt Lindland on Team Quest

"There's a lot of speculation about guys leaving. Dan's always lived in California. That's where he wants to be, where his home is. He lives by his family. Randy moved to Vegas, where the UFC is based. That's his career, you know? That was his focus. It had nothing to do with him leaving the gym. His ex-wife lived here and he wanted to move away. I think there's a lot of speculation around all this stuff. These guys are doing their own thing and living their own lives. It doesn't mean we don't still care about them. I love these guys; we're family. Team Quest doesn't stop because you started your own gym or you moved out of state."

Henderson both reached the top of the sport, in the **UFC** and **Pride** respectively, and Lindland was a major player in the UFC's middleweight division. The ride came to an end, not because of anything inside the cage, but because of turmoil outside it. While filming the first season of ***The Ultimate Fighter***, Couture met Kim Borrego at a party thrown by **John Lewis**. Couture would leave his wife Trish soon after, sparking tension in the camp that was more like a family than a business partnership. When Couture appeared with Kim on television at UFC 51, members of Team Quest were furious over Trish's public embarrassment. Couture ended up leaving the team, moving to Las Vegas where he opened up a new gym, Xtreme Couture, and married Kim in 2006.

Henderson would soon part ways with his buddies in Oregon as well, leaving to open his own branch of Team Quest in 2006 near Temecula, California. While Henderson and his California-based team often train with Lindland and Follis in Oregon, and Couture even returned to the gym in the weeks before his UFC 102 fight in Portland against **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, the team that dominated the sport for much of the early 2000s is functionally no more.

The Ultimate Fighter

The **UFC** was floundering. Despite the best efforts of the **Fertitta brothers** and President **Dana White**, the company had lost more than \$40 million in four years. They had tried everything: pyro-rific ring entrances straight out of **professional wrestling**, Carmen Electra as their spokeswoman, the return of washed-up legends like **Ken Shamrock** and **Tank Abbott**. Nothing was capturing America's attention.

For years people in the sport were sure that all the UFC needed to succeed was television. America, they said, would immediately embrace the sport. Lukewarm success on Fox Sports cured UFC executives of that delusion. The television had to reach the right fans, at the right time, with the right platform. They needed the right concept. White wanted to re-do the old *Thursday Night Fights* boxing show he had grown up on as a kid, but putting the live shows on the air was a hard sell. Despite a ten-year history with no deaths on a major sanctioned show, executives feared that someone would die in the cage. They needed something else, but ideas were tough to come by.

Then the Fertittas starred in a little-seen television reality show called *American Casino*. Reality television was taking the entire industry in a new and exciting direction. There were shows set in the kitchen, at the beach, in the professional wrestling business: why not a reality show centered on the world of MMA? The original idea was a spinoff of *American Casino*, called *American Promoter*. Dana White would star and it would take fans into the world of big-time fighting. White was personable and a natural on-camera talent. But then someone had a company altering idea. Why not focus the show on the fighters themselves? White could still have a major role, but in the end, there would be no UFC without the fighters in the Octagon. This was their story: it was called *The Ultimate Fighter*.

The show was a ratings success, brilliantly serving two purposes. First, it was a breeding ground for new talent. Fans could learn to love a new batch of young stars every season, and then follow their careers in the UFC. The undercards, at the very least, would be stocked with recognizable (and cheap) talent for years to come. The show also served to promote the UFC's veteran fighters, who would serve as coaches for the young up-and-comers. Not only would fans get to know them better, but the two coaches would also square off in a pay-per-view main event right after the season ended. The show would create stars, while also functioning as a 12-week commercial for UFC pay-per-view.

It was a brilliant concept, one that was executed to perfection. Pay-per-view business exploded, fans got to know the fighters, and a new generation of stars was created. *Ultimate Fighter* winners like **Forrest Griffin**, **Matt Serra**, and **Rashad Evans** became world champions while others like **Joe Stevenson**, **Michael Bisping**, and **Diego Sanchez** became headliners and legitimate contenders.

After nine star-making seasons, as the show seemed to be losing steam, both critically and in the ratings, **Zuffa** changed the equation. Internet sensation and **EliteXC** headliner **Kimbo Slice** was brought in, setting record ratings early and breathing new life into an old favorite. While Kimbo wasn't the

prototypical struggling young fighter (in fact, sources say he was paid \$300,000 for his time) he was, despite his headline status, a fighter trying to figure out his place in the sport. Slice was portrayed as a famous fighter in over his head, humble in defeat and happy to learn what it took to make it in the UFC. It was a dramatic change in public persona, peeling away the street thug to show the family man with a heart of gold. Slice was like *The Ultimate Fighter* itself in a way — after years in the spotlight, both were still able to surprise and delight.

Thomas, Din

Nickname: Dinyero

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155 lbs

Born: 9/28/76

Debut: WVF: Jacksonville Vale Tudo 1 (10/28/98)

Career Record: 24-8

Notable Wins: Jens Pulver (WEF: New Blood Conflict); Matt Serra (UFC 41)

Notable Losses: Caol Uno (Shooto: Renaxis 4, UFC 39); B.J. Penn (UFC 32); Kenny Florian (*Ultimate Fight Night* 11)

Din Thomas was a player in the **UFC's** first, abortive foray into the lightweight division, the one that ended when title-holder **Jens Pulver** left the company over a contract dispute and **B.J. Penn** and **Caol Uno** fought to a draw in the anticlimax of a four-man tournament to crown a new champion. Thomas, who entered the UFC already holding a win over Pulver in a smaller promotion, dropped his UFC debut to B.J. Penn, and fell to Caol Uno before earning a narrow decision win over **Matt Serra**. With his sharp striking and black belt-level **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu**, Thomas was able to hang with some of the best in the world.

This was almost as true four years later, when Thomas got another shot at the big time as a cast member of ***The Ultimate Fighter***. Billed as “The Comeback,” the fourth season of the reality series featured fighters who, like Thomas, had already had at least one prior UFC appearance, but had either crashed out or faded away. Unfortunately, the most memorable exchange Thomas was involved in on the show didn't come inside the Octagon; it came in a sushi restaurant, when he was on the receiving end of what was either light-hearted ribbing or racial taunting, depending on your ear. **Matt Hughes**, seeing Thomas whispering conspiratorially to **Georges St. Pierre**, shouted across the room, “It's not like you got really tiny lips! I can see those lips movin' around!” It was uncomfortable to say the least.

Thomas failed to get by Chris Lytle in the tournament semi-final, but managed to stay with the company for five fights after the show ran its course.

Thomas picked up a decision win over **Clay Guida**, but dropped his highest-profile bout against **Kenny Florian** after he blew out his knee in the first round. A loss to Josh Neer spelled the end for his second UFC stint, and it was back to grinding it out on the independent circuit as an **American Top Team** fighter. In a strange 2007 incident, Thomas was arrested on charges of illegally staging fights out of his academies in front of surprisingly large paying crowds. The charges were dismissed only a month later — there's no question everything was on the up-and-up. But a move into fight promotion might not be a bad idea.

Thompson, James

Nickname: The Colossus

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 257 lbs

Born: 12/16/78

Debut: Ground & Pound 2 (1/25/03)

Career Record: 15-13 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Dan Severn (Ultimate Combat 11); Hidehiko Yoshida (Pride Shockwave 2006); Don Frye (Pride 34)

Notable Losses: Kazuyuki Fujita (Pride Total Elimination Absolute); Kimbo Slice (EliteXC: Primetime)

Has there ever been a more sickening sight in mixed martial arts than James Thompson's wobbly, exploding cauliflower ear? As the ear bobbed and weaved its way to the cage in front of a CBS audience of over seven million viewers tuned in to see **Kimbo Slice**, you knew there was going to be trouble. The official outside the cage lingered over the ear as he checked Thompson over, even going so far as to *touch* that thing, but what was he going to do, call off the main event minutes before it was set to begin? No, it was full speed ahead for James Thompson and the bizarre fetus hanging off the side of his head.

The aftershocks of every decent shot Kimbo landed over the course of their three-round debacle could be seen in that ear, which swayed about in transfixing recoil. It was really, really gross. And then it blew up. Early in the third, Kimbo landed a hard right hook to the side of the head, and it popped. Color commentator **Frank Shamrock** fixed in words what we all felt: "That ear popped! That ear popped! It . . . popped!" As blood and *whatever* ran down his neck, a dazed Thompson ate a few more solid shots against the cage before the fight was stopped on a TKO.

It was awful. It was also by far the most interesting moment in the career of James Thompson, an enormous former body builder who was sometimes able to overwhelm smaller opponents with his size and aggression, but who

largely got by on his look. He was a gimmick, with a monstrous, inflated physique that made him appear to be a much more credible opponent than he ever actually was. James Thompson, the fighter, was largely forgettable. But that *ear* — that’s going to be hard to forget.

TKO Major League MMA

Enter the name of former TKO President and CEO Stéphane Patry into a Google search, and your top result will be a **Sherdog** thread titled “Stéphane Patry is a Weasel.” That’s got to hurt. As the manager of prominent Canadian mixed martial artists like **Georges St. Pierre** (since departing to join Shari Spencer), **Patrick Côté**, and David Loiseau, Patry has drawn probably more than his fair share of criticism for his handling of business issues and contract disputes surrounding some of his fighters. The fight game is greasy, and whether or not Stéphane Patry is a particularly greasy, greasy weasel is a point that can be argued either way. But what is indisputable is that Patry was instrumental in building Montreal into one of the best MMA markets in North America through TKO Major League MMA. While the “Major League” tag was always more aspirational than actual, especially in the beginning, by the end the promotion’s eight-year run TKO had staged eight shows in the cavernous Bell Centre, home of the Canadiens — and in Montreal, that’s as major league as it gets. Patry moved on in late 2008, and the promotion was shuttered soon thereafter, but in its heyday it was without question the most important MMA organization in Canada. “I honestly don’t think there are too many places we could go and sell 22,000 tickets as fast as we did here,” **Dana White** said about Montreal. “Canada is the mecca of mixed martial arts right now and I didn’t see that one coming.” Maybe Stéphane Patry did.

Toe hold: see **Leg locks**

Tokoro, Hideo

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 139 lbs

Born: 8/22/77

Debut: Titan Fighting Championship 1 (9/29/00)

Career Record: 26-22-1

Notable Wins: Royler Gracie (Dynamite!! 2006); Abel Cullum (Dream 9)

Notable Losses: Caol Uno (Hero’s 3); Kiyoshi Tamura (Dynamite!! 2007)

The way he was marketed by K-1, it was always tempting to dismiss Hideo Tokoro as a gimmick. A good-looking Japanese kid who worked as a janitor, lived in a tiny apartment, and bathed in a sink while fighting to make it as

mixed martial artist for the tiny **ZST** promotion, there's no doubt Tokoro was a compelling story. K-1 took him out of obscurity and made him a star, and he gave the broad audience that he reached some genuinely compelling moments. Foremost among them: a draw against the legendary **Royce Gracie**, where Gracie was only saved the embarrassment of a loss to a much smaller man by his insistence no judges score the fight. There can be no doubt that Tokoro gives his all every time out, fighting at a breakneck pace and often showing excellent positional work on the ground, but he's also proven to be wildly inconsistent. Never a world-beater, Tokoro has looked particularly bad since the emergence of the **Dream** promotion in early 2008. Tokoro was an unlikely star to begin with, and his time in the public eye looks to be running out.

Torres, Miguel

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 135 lbs

Born: 1/18/81

Debut: Finke's Full Contact Challenge (3/27/00)

Career Record: 37-3

Notable Wins: Chase Beebe (WEC 32); Yoshiro Maeda (WEC 34); Manny Tapia (WEC 37); Takeya Mizugaki (WEC 40)

Notable Loss: Brian Bowles (WEC 42)

Like a handful of other richly deserving fighters — **Urijah Faber**, **Mike Brown**, and **Brian Bowles** among them — Miguel Torres was rescued from virtual anonymity when the **UFC**'s parent company **Zuffa** purchased the **WEC** in late 2006 and brought the excitement of the bantamweight and featherweight divisions to a broader audience. Before he made his **WEC** debut in 2007, it didn't matter that Torres had fought more than 30 professional fights — and who knows how many unofficial, unsanctioned contests — with only a single decision loss to show for it, or that **Carlson Gracie** thought he was the best fighter in the world at 135 pounds. Torres was never going to receive the respect (or the paydays) a man of his talents deserved fighting exclusively out of small shows close to home in Indiana. The **WEC** changed that.

The **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** black belt and dangerous **Muay Thai** striker with the best mullet in the game showed such well-rounded skills in his first five **WEC** fights that he was universally acclaimed as one of the top ten pound-for-pound fighters in the world. The submission skills he demonstrated against Jeff Bedard and Chase Beebe, the quick hands against Manny Tapia, and the toughness on display in his bouts with Yoshiro Maeda and Takeya Mizugaki proved Torres to be on par names like **Anderson Silva**, **Georges St. Pierre**, and **Fedor Emelianenko** — the kind of company he began to keep. And so it was legitimately shocking

In Their Own Words: Miguel Torres on the early days

“When I first started fighting, it was kind of crazy, man. Back then it was banned in Chicago, so a lot of the fights were here in Indiana. I started fighting at bars. They had clubs that put up a little ring in the middle of the dance floor in the bar and put tables around it. You go to the pre-fight meetings and there wasn’t arranged fights. There was a room of like 20 guys, they say, ‘How much do you weigh? How much do you weigh?’ There were no scales, it was on the honor system, no blood tests. They let us in, and that’s how you fought. I fought bikers, Marines, boxers. I fought a barrage of different guys. . . . Those fights taught me how to handle pressure, how to fight in an environment where, you know, I’m not from that place. I was the only . . . well, it was me and my corner man going into a redneck bar, it was like a bunch of bikers. It gave me all my experience.”

to see Torres caught rushing in against Brian Bowles at their WEC 42 contest, dropped by a short right hook and pounded out to lose the world title that looked to be his for as long as he wanted to keep it. But given Torres’s relative youth, his well-balanced attacked, and his uncommon focus and desire, few think it will be his last run atop the bantamweight division.

Triangle choke

A chokehold, often though not exclusively executed from **guard**, in which the attacker traps the opponent’s neck and one of his arms between his legs. The foot of the attacker’s strangling leg is locked into position underneath the opposite knee, creating a constricting triangular configuration.

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu great Jean Jacques Machado once strangely claimed that the triangle choke was “invented” in the 1970s by Sergio Dorileo, who “had been studying a Japanese book of positions and invented the Triangle.” Romero “Jacare” Cavalcanti clarified this somewhat when he told *Martial Arts Illustrated* that Dorileo, training at Rolls Gracie’s academy, “showed everyone what he had learned from some old **judo** book and since then everyone has known the triangle. I mean, all the jiu-jitsu guys.” It’s remarkable that one of MMA’s most successful submission holds entered the diverse Brazilian Jiu-jitsu syllabus so late. But the triangle choke is a relatively modern innovation.

Sankaku jime (sometimes transliterated as sangaku jime) was not a part of the early judo that **Mitsuyo Maeda** brought with him to Brazil in 1914 which formed the basis of the Gracie family’s art. Nor was it part of the traditional

koryu (“old school”) battlefield Japanese jujutsu teachings out of which judo emerged. The reason for this is obvious enough: as judo world champion Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki writes, “In a combat with no rules, it is inadvisable — to say the least — for a man to wrap his legs around an opponent’s neck, putting his groin area within biting reach.” Sport, however, is another matter entirely, and it was in the era of intercollegiate kosen judo competition that ground fighting legend Tsunetane Oda is credited with developing the versatile technique, which can be applied from the front or side against a turtled (on all fours) opponent, or from the back, in addition to the familiar attack from guard. In the decades since, the triangle has become an integral component of judo ground fighting or ne waza.

For MMA fans, the triangle choke begins with **Royce Gracie** catching **Dan Severn** in the hold at **UFC 4** after a grueling 15 minutes underneath the powerful wrestler. Finally seeing the kind of opening he’d been waiting for all along, Gracie methodically secured Severn’s right arm as he wrapped his legs around Severn’s neck and locked his right foot behind his left knee. Severn began to go limp as the choke took hold, while color commentator and Greco-Roman Olympic champion **Jeff Blatnick** assured the viewers at home that there was nothing there. Severn tapped, most of the audience was left wondering what they’d just seen, and Gracie took his last UFC title — thanks in no small part to an old judo book.

Trigg, Frank

Nickname: Twinkle Toes

Height: 5’9”

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 5/7/72

Debut: USWF 7 (10/18/97)

Career Record: 19-8

Notable Wins: Jean Jacques Machado (Vale Tudo Japan 98); Dennis Hallman (WFA 3, UFC 48); Jason Miller (Icon Sport: Mayhem vs. Trigg); Kazuo Misaki (Pride 33)

Notable Losses: Hayato Sakurai (Shooto: R.E.A.D. Final); Matt Hughes (UFC 45, UFC 52); Georges St. Pierre (UFC 54); Robbie Lawler (Icon Sport: Epic); Josh Koscheck (UFC 103); Matt Serra (UFC 109)

“I did a lot of nude modeling when I first started coming through to kinda make ends meet when I first moved out to L.A., and so there’s a lot of nude modeling pictures out there of me. . . . You know, it’s not that I’m against nudity; it’s just that I think that portion of my career, as far as modeling goes, is over.” These are not the words of a Hollywood actress trying to explain away some newly surfaced, slightly embarrassing photos from a time before she caught her big break. No, these, unfortunately, are the words of welterweight contender Frank Trigg. Google him if you dare.



Trigg has often seemed almost desperate to be famous. How else to explain the modeling, the acting, the **professional wrestling**, and a stint on forgotten VH-1 reality series *Kept*, in which Jerry Hall — model, actress, former Mrs. Mick Jagger, and current boner-pill spokeswoman — searched for a kept man? He was eliminated early, finishing tenth out of 12 contestants, in what was perhaps his biggest career loss that did not come by way of **rear naked choke**.

None of this silliness takes away from the considerable talents of Frank Trigg, the fighter. After **wrestling** his way as far as the 2000 Olympic trials, Trigg turned his attention (most of it, anyway) to an MMA career that saw him rise quickly through the welterweight ranks. With only one loss (to **Shooto** champ **Hayato Sakurai**) in his first 11 fights, Trigg challenged the great **Matt Hughes** for his welterweight title at **UFC 45**. Trigg, always a talker, had gotten under Hughes' skin with his pre-fight comments, but it was Hughes that got under Trigg's chin for the dramatic, standing rear naked choke finish to a great fight. Trigg followed his unsuccessful title challenge with two 2004 UFC wins and found himself across the cage from Hughes once again, but that bout ended much like the first: rear naked choke, round one.

Bounced from the UFC following another first round, rear naked choke loss — this time to a then-rising star, **Georges St. Pierre** — Trigg had his ups and

downs fighting in Japan and Hawaii, picking up solid wins over **Jason Miller** and **Kazuo Misaki**, and dropping bouts to Carlos Condit and “Ruthless” **Robbie Lawler**. He also took on the impossible job of replacing the irreplaceable **Bas Rutten** as **Pride**’s English language color commentator. But Trigg proved that he’s still serious about competition, rather than just calling the action, by signing a four-fight UFC deal in 2009.

TUF: see *The Ultimate Fighter*



Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)

It began with a belch — a unique introduction to a unique combat sports concept, courtesy of the highly caffeinated announcer “Superfoot” Bill Wallace. It was plenty funny, but the comical mood didn’t last long. It was obvious right away that the UFC was very serious business.

Gerard Gordeau kicked a tooth out of a sumo wrestler’s mouth, **Ken Shamrock** twisted **Patrick Smith**’s foot until the man who claimed he felt no pain screamed out loud. Then Shamrock “tapped the mat three times,” submitting to a **Royce Gracie** choke. To those raised on **kung fu** movies and **boxing** — basically every fight fan in America — it was a confusing whirlwind of new techniques and strategies.

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, proven effective by the skinny and unimposing Gracie, had suddenly relegated most other traditional martial arts to a secondary status. And that, after all, was the entire point of the exercise.

They say success has many fathers, while failure is an orphan. That may be a cynical take, but in the case of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, it certainly took a real team effort to transport an updated version of the old Gracie Challenge from **Rorion Gracie**’s imagination to America’s television screens. Gracie had a clear mission in mind: spreading his family’s martial art, a **judo** variant they called **Gracie Jiu-jitsu**.

Teaming with ad man **Art Davie**, Gracie struck out all over town. No one was interested in their quasi-legal street fighting. No takers for a battle of the martial arts champions. It looked like just another good idea destined to fail; until Campbell McLaren was intrigued enough to take it to his boss Bob Meyrowitz at **Semaphore Entertainment Group**. Meyrowitz, though he didn’t attend the first event, deserves credit for taking a chance on a product no one else was willing to try.

There was no recognition, in the beginning, that they were creating a new sport. McLaren, in fact, wanted nothing to do with sport. This was, to borrow a term from its critics, a freak show. Davie mixed experienced martial



artists in with street brawlers, fat sumo, and a collection of pro wrestlers (and **pro wrestling** wannabes) to create a show that was sure to shock and awe. But as **UFC 1** gave way to **UFC 10**, it became clear that this contest of wills and skills was here to stay. The American public had embraced what announcer **Jeff Blatnick** called **MMA**: mixed martial arts. Politicians, pundits, and cable programmers had very different opinions — and in the end theirs meant more.

They were under pressure for the enormous quantity of sex and violence on the airwaves. Instead of recognizing this as a pervasive problem, one that was spread across the culture, they were on the lookout for scapegoats. And the best targets available were rap music and what they called “human cock-fighting,” a sport that claimed in its own advertising to be lawless and potentially lethal.

Led by future U.S. presidential hopeful John McCain, an Arizona Republican who sent letters to the governors of all 50 states encouraging them to ban the sport, the **UFC** faced a hard battle against regulators everywhere they went, men and women devoted to putting the promotion out of business. It came to a head in New York, where a last-minute push by Mayor Rudy Giuliani sent the **UFC** scrambling to Dothan, Alabama, just a day before **UFC 12**. Soon the only home for **UFC** shows was on a satellite dish. Even

though fans had to choose with their wallets to buy pay-per-view shows, cable companies under pressure from McCain — now head of the powerful Senate Commerce Committee — wouldn't allow adults to choose their own method of entertainment.

It was a dark time for the UFC. Great fighters like **Frank Shamrock**, **Bas Rutten**, **Tito Ortiz**, and **Kevin Randleman** were as good as anyone who ever stepped in the Octagon, but almost no one saw them ply their trade. To make matters worse, no end was in sight. As the promotion trudged from town to town, primarily in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, SEG officials led by David Isaacs, Blatnick, and **Joe Silva** tried desperately to get the show regulated across the country. They spearheaded the sport's legalization in New Jersey, but the state that mattered more than any other, that led the way in the fight game, was Nevada. When the UFC's overtures were rejected there, Meyrowitz made a tough call: it was time, after giving almost seven years and so much heart and energy, to sell.

Dana White, a former small-scale boxing promoter and manager of fighters like **Tito Ortiz** and **Chuck Liddell**, was the frontman for the new organization called **Zuffa**, Italian for "scrap." White's backers were the **Fertitta brothers**, ultra-wealthy casino owners with the connections to get the sport onto the glittery Las Vegas strip.

The show was almost immediately back on pay-per-view and legal in Las Vegas. Success, thought sure to follow, was hard earned. The UFC lost more than \$40 million in their first few years, trying to find a formula that worked. Their first show widely available on pay-per-view, UFC 33, was an unmitigated disaster. The fights went to dull decisions and the show went long, cutting off the main event and costing the promotion millions.

A business venture that had started with such promise seemed to have run its course. The Fertittas asked White to find a buyer for their struggling sports franchise. They had an offer for three times what they had paid. They wouldn't get rich, but everyone would see a tidy return on their investment. But the Fertittas refused to give in. Having hundreds of millions of dollars and tremendous confidence in your project made that decision possible. They knew success was in the cards and were just waiting for the ace in the hole.

The Ultimate Fighter reality show was that opportunity they had been waiting for, but one that almost passed them by. White and the Fertittas almost went with a show that would have focused on Dana, called *American Promoter*. Had that happened, the UFC as we know it would likely not exist today. It was *The Ultimate Fighter* that saved the company. Reality TV was the right medium to attract younger fans who weren't ready to jump right

into the deep end of pay-per-view. These new fans got to sample the product, got introduced to the sport's nuances, and got to know a new generation of stars.

The company that just one year before had lost tens of millions of dollars was making a mint. Old stars like Ken Shamrock and Royce Gracie were brought back into the fold, lending their names and hard earned credibility to younger fighters like Ortiz and **Matt Hughes** in front of record-setting audiences. And with that, the UFC was off and running.

Ortiz's blood feud with "The Iceman" Chuck Liddell drew more than a million pay-per-view buys, and with his knockout win Liddell became the UFC's first breakout star. He made the television talk-show rounds, made the cover of *ESPN: The Magazine*, and appeared on the HBO show *Entourage*. And, oh yeah, he also won seven fights in a row, all by devastating knockout.

Just as business seemed to be settling into a comfortable (and very profitable) rut, there was another massive influx of fans. This time they were from the world of pro wrestling, following the massive muscle-bound **Brock Lesnar** into the sport of MMA. Lesnar was a physical specimen, 280 pounds of muscle and a former NCAA champion wrestler. From his WWE days he knew instinctively how to sell a fight, but he also had a fierce competitive streak that drove him to excel. After losing his first fight in the UFC, falling victim to a **Frank Mir knee bar** despite running over Mir like a freight train for the first minute, Lesnar won three in a row. He took the UFC title from **Randy Couture**

In Their Own Words: Dana White on the UFC's success

"Since the first season of *The Ultimate Fighter*, this thing has continued to grow. Part of the reason the UFC is doing so great is a lot of the athletes we have. These guys always deliver. It's very rare to see a bad UFC fight. You don't come to one of our events and have everything suck. That just doesn't happen. These guys come to fight and the athletes deliver time and time again. People ask me all the time about how much this thing has grown since 2001. It's great, believe me, and it's been a fun ride. I couldn't wait for us to be on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and we got that. We got our TV show. We got sanctioned in all these states, had our first fight overseas. There have been so many milestones and so many great things that have happened since the beginning of the business. And there are a lot more to come. We haven't even scratched the surface on how big this business is going to be. We're just getting started as far as I'm concerned."

at UFC 91 and avenged his loss to Mir at UFC 100, setting the UFC record with 1.6 million pay-per-view buys in the process.

The UFC had conquered the American market. They surpassed both pro wrestling and boxing as the leading combat sport in the niche pay-per-view market. White and the Fertittas weren't satisfied with that — they were the kind of men who would never be satisfied, always wanting more. They had their eye on international expansion and a groundbreaking network television deal. And with their track record there can be little doubt that wherever the UFC leads, success will follow.

Ultimate Ultimate

The **UFC's** version of the “All Star” game was held in Colorado on December 16, 1995. The event, known as **U95** to fight nerds and tape collectors, was missing the UFC's two biggest stars. **SEG** offered **Royce Gracie** a multi-fight contract and a new car, but his brother **Rorion** wanted no part of it. They wanted Royce to be able to negotiate a new deal after every event. Many thought the influx of bigger and better fighters into the promotion had as much to do with Royce's decision as money. Gracie proved doubters wrong by returning in a tournament featuring the world's best fighters years later in **Pride**. **Ken Shamrock** was also unavailable — he had a fight two days earlier in Japan for **Pancrase** and was wary of fighting such tough competition so quickly after what could potentially be a grueling bout. Their absence left the door open for **Dan Severn**, who dispatched all competition thanks in part to the introduction of the judge's decision. Severn decisioned **David Abbott** and **Oleg Taktarov** on his way to winning \$150,000 in prize money.

The UFC's second “All Star” tournament — December 7, 1996 in Birmingham, Alabama — was once again missing the sport's best fighter. **Mark Coleman**, the man who dominated the previous two UFC tournaments (UFC 10 and UFC 11) was too ill to compete. With no Coleman, the tournament was built to showcase a single fight: Ken Shamrock versus David “Tank” Abbott. The two had been itching to fight for some time and the two entourages had gotten into scraps on more than one occasion. The fight seemed set after Shamrock beat **Brian Johnston**, but with Shamrock there was always a catastrophe lurking around the corner. He broke his hand on Johnston's head and couldn't face Abbott in the semi-finals. It would be his last fight in the Octagon for six years. Instead, it was up to **Don Frye** to derail the Tank. Allegedly he had some help. Frye was set to face Mark Hall in the semi-finals and attorney Robert DePersia managed both men. Frye beat Hall in seconds, in a fight many considered fishy, winning with a **leg lock** he had never used

before and has never used since. Frye, who had been ill prior to the show, was going in against Abbott feeling fresh. Abbott pounded Frye, bloodying the smaller man and looked on his way to the tournament championship. Losing a standup exchange, Frye somehow managed to floor Abbott by stepping on his foot. That was all it took. He was able to secure a **rear naked choke** and an exhausted Abbott tapped immediately. It was one of the most exciting back-and-forth fights of all time. It was also Frye's swan song in the UFC. Like Shamrock, he turned to the more lucrative **professional wrestling** industry, leaving fighting for New Japan Pro Wrestling.

Underground, The

For the most part, it's a locker room. At its worst, it's a sewer. But at its best, Kirik Jenness' Underground Forum (at www.MixedMartialArts.com) takes the pulse of the sport, offers posters a chance to interact with a considerable number of pro fighters, and produces truly weird stuff that you will simply never find anywhere else. A multi-page thread devoted to **Brock Lesnar's** theoretical Dungeons & Dragons stats? First-person reports of **Shonie Carter's** latest intercontinental mishaps, complete with pleas for help? **Sean Gannon** and **Kimbo Slice's** people laying the groundwork for the infamous dojo brawl that helped both men fight their way to the big time? **Tito Ortiz** defending the honor of his porn star significant other? **Jason Miller** describing *with precision* the kinds of sexual acts "Brazilian nuthuggers" might want to consider? **Eddie Bravo** and **Joe Rogan** spreading the internet conspiracy theory du jour, and living out their epic bromance for all to see? There's only one place to find it. At the time of this writing, the top thread at the Underground reads, "BAM! Brock Lesnar smacks your GF. What do you do?" The Underground, ladies and gentlemen. **TUF** noobs beware.

Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts

The **UFC** began in Colorado in 1993, billed as fights with no rules. That was never the case — although in the early UFC shows the rules were more like suggestions. At UFC 1, there were prohibitions only against biting and eye gouging. Rule violations would result in the offender being fined \$1,000; they would not affect the outcome of the fights. **Semaphore Entertainment Group's** Campbell McLaren, the man who first made the call to give the UFC a chance on pay-per-view, thought that the sport was best promoted as a brutal spectacle.

Eventually, promoters realized some rules were necessary for the sport to survive the fierce political battle waged by Arizona senator John McCain.

SEG officials were also, rightfully, concerned about fighter well-being and safety. Color commentator **Jeff Blatnick** was put in charge of creating formal rules for the UFC, and to that end he created the Mixed Martial Arts Council to bring together the sport's most ardent supporters.

For Blatnick, necessity was the mother of invention. As fighters found new and increasingly creative ways to take advantage of the rules, Blatnick and the council would respond with new and better rules. Changes came slowly. Time limits were enforced for all fights at UFC 7, judges could render a decision when a fight went to a draw at **Ultimate Ultimate** 1995, weight classes were established at UFC 12, and gloves (first used in Japan's **Shooto** promotion) became mandatory for all fighters at UFC 14.

When the UFC began looking for official sanctioning from state athletic commissions in 1999, they were prepared. Over the years, their own rulebook had become a substantial document. It was adapted, almost word for word, in both California and New Jersey in 2000 as the sport began its phoenix-like return from obscurity. While the California State Athletic Commission approved a set of rules that became the foundation for all rules to follow, they couldn't get approval to run fight shows in the state until 2005. New Jersey would take the lead.

In Their Own Words: Jeff Blatnick on the MMAC manual, which became the Unified Rules

"The UFC created a manual. We covered everything from conflicts of interest for the judges and referees to the basics of how to regulate the sport. The job was given to me, but I had a lot of help from **John McCarthy**, **Joe Silva**, and many of the fighters themselves. I wanted to get a handle on what people thought the right way to do things was. What is the right length of a round? How could we balance the rules to be fair to both grapplers and strikers? It all came together cleanly and we formed the Mixed Martial Arts Council. From there we had to change things as fighters pushed the envelope. When **Tank Abbott** tried to throw Cal Worsham over the fence. When a Japanese fighter grabbed his opponent's glove and almost turned it inside out. When **Mikey Burnett** grabbed **Pat Miletich's** shorts for almost an entire 15 minutes. Anything that popped up, we had to address. Things you never thought of, like **Phil Baroni** licking **Matt Lindland's** face. Finger in an orifice. As fighters pushed the envelope, we had to respond."

Interestingly, it was not the UFC that promoted the first officially sanctioned event in New Jersey, where New Jersey State Athletic Control Board Executive Director Larry Hazzard was at the forefront of the movement to bring MMA into the mainstream. Paul Smith, who had once worked with **Ken Shamrock** in an ill-fated attempt at running his own shows in California, joined the International Fighting Championship promotion to spearhead the legalization of MMA in both California and New Jersey. The IFC held the first sanctioned event in September 2000, headlined by **Vernon "Tiger" White**. The UFC followed in November with UFC 28.

The events were almost like a tryout for the new sport. Hazard liked what he saw, and in April 2001, he got serious. A number of promoters, including the new UFC owners **Zuffa**, met with Hazard at his Trenton, New Jersey, offices. **Marc Ratner**, then executive director of the prestigious Nevada State Athletic Commission, joined them via conference call. They established what are now called the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts. The rules were nearly identical to Blatnick's MMAC manual, with several important differences. The iconic **gi**, made famous in MMA by **Royce Gracie**, was no longer allowed. Wrestling shoes were also banned, not for any safety reasons, but because of a bizarre concern about hygiene. Fighters would be barefoot to prevent debris from outside being brought into the cage by their shoes. No one could explain why fighters' shoes would be any dirtier than the ring announcer's or the referee's, who would still be allowed to wear their shoes.

The other major change was to weight classes. The Unified Rules established the same weight classes used in MMA today, from flyweights (under 125 pounds) to super heavyweights (above 265 pounds). Today, the Unified Rules are re-examined yearly by the Association of Boxing Commissions. The MMA committee is headed by New Jersey's Nick Lembo and includes Nevada's Keith Kizer and other important regulators from across the nation.

Uno, Caol

Nickname: Uno Shoten

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 154 lbs

Born: 5/8/72

Debut: Shooto: Let's Get Lost (10/4/96)

Career Record: 27-13-5

Notable Wins: Rumina Sato (Shooto: 10th Anniversary Event); Din Thomas (Shooto: Renaxis 4, UFC 39); Yves Edwards (UFC 37); Hideo Tokoro (Hero's 3)

Notable Losses: Hayato Sakurai (Shooto: Let's Get Lost); Jens Pulver (UFC 30); B.J. Penn (UFC 34); Joachim Hansen (Hero's 1); Kid Yamamoto (Hero's 3); Gesias Cavalcante (Hero's 7); Shinya Aoki (Dream 5); Spencer Fisher (UFC 99)

Outside the ring, Caol Uno doesn't necessarily look like a fighter. Once inside, though, something changes. He flips a switch, and all of a sudden the man who only moments before looked like an uncommonly fashionable Keebler elf is suddenly transformed into a highly skilled, first-rate submission wrestler and dynamic mixed martial artist — who still kind of looks like a Keebler elf.

Uno's solid win-loss record becomes all the more impressive when you consider the level of competition he's faced throughout his long career. When the best lightweight fighters were in **Shooto**, so was he, making his debut in 1996 alongside another future Japanese great, **Hayato Sakurai**. Three years later, Uno had fought his way to the top of the card, and took the Shooto welterweight (154 pounds) title in a classic bout against **Rumina Sato** that remains one of the sport's all-time best. Soon thereafter he was part of the **UFC**'s first foray into the lightweight division, going the distance against the likes of **Jens Pulver** and **B.J. Penn**. When K-1 helped raise the profile of lightweights with its **Hero's** series, there he was, putting on arguably the best match of 2004 against **Joachim Hansen** in the promotion's very first show. After the landscape of Japanese MMA changed, **Dream** hosted many of the best lightweight matches in the world in its 2008 Grand Prix, and Uno fought his way to the semi-finals, ultimately coming up short against top-star **Shinya Aoki**. With that behind him, it was back to the UFC in what was seen as the time as a surprise move. But we should have expected it. Caol Uno constantly seeks out new challenges, new opportunities to test himself against the best in the world, wherever they may be.

Between bouts, Uno somehow finds time to juggle four fashion labels, an activity which he sees as complementary to the world of martial arts. "Since I started competing Shooto in high school," Uno told fashion Web site Freshness in 2009, "fashion was always an integral part of the sport. My role model, Shooto veteran Rumina Sato, was not only skillful and strong, but fashionable too." On both fronts, you can definitely make the case that the student has surpassed the master.



Vale Tudo

The original Brazilian Vale Tudo (Portuguese for “anything goes”) was born in the traveling carnival. A part of the show, together with the bearded lady and other sideshow attractions, was the **boxing** booth. The booth was a large tent inside which the fighters who were part of the show would accept challengers from the crowd. Often these challengers were ringers — part of the act masquerading as an audience member to make the show more interesting. These shows didn’t always feature boxers: many great **catch wrestlers** made their living on the carnival circuit as well, easily beating local toughs.

It wasn’t until the late 1950s that a new meaning took shape for the words Vale Tudo. Years after the original Gracie brothers’ challenge matches pitted discipline versus discipline, Brazilian Vale Tudo came to television in Rio de Janeiro. The show was called the *Heróis do Ringue*, and featured many of the Gracies’ top students and even the occasional family member. Like in the original **UFC** events, jiu-jitsu often proved superior to all other arts; also like the early UFCs, the Gracie family was controlling the matchmaking. But, as fights tend to do, things spun out of control. Joao Alberto Barreto, later known as the incompetent referee at **UFC 1**, broke an opponent’s arm with an arm lock when he refused to tap out. That brutal display spelled the end for *Heróis do Ringue* and for Vale Tudo as a major spectator sport in Brazil. It was replaced on television by **professional wrestling**.

It wasn’t until MMA exploded in popularity worldwide that the kind of fights that influenced **Rorion Gracie** the most made their triumphant return to Brazil. Like the early UFC shows, Vale Tudo fights barely resemble modern MMA fights. Rules were very limited when Vale Tudo reappeared on the scene in São Paulo, Brazil, in the form of the World Vale Tudo Championship and the **International Vale Tudo Championship**. Head butts, elbows, stomps to the head, knees to a downed opponent: they were not just legal, but encouraged. The fights were bloody spectacles, often wars of attrition fought bare-knuckle until the last man was standing.

Like they had in the 1960s, the fights proved too controversial to last for long. São Paulo banned Vale Tudo events and the sport of MMA was forced underground in its spiritual homeland of Brazil. There is hope on the horizon. The UFC is airing shows in the country and hopes to promote events in Brazil. The Brazilian economy is booming and the kinds of middle-class consumers who can purchase UFC events are being rapidly created by increased energy independence.

It's the circle — or perhaps the Octagon — of life. The UFC sprang from old-school Brazilian Vale Tudo. Perhaps a Brazilian MMA renaissance will come from the UFC's promotional efforts in MMA's homeland?

Varelans, Paul

Nickname: The Polar Bear

Height: 6'8"

Weight: 300 lbs

Born: 1969

Debut: UFC 6 (7/14/95)

Career Record: 9-9

Notable Losses: Tank Abbott (UFC 6); Marco Ruas (UFC 7); Dan Severn (Ultimate Ultimate 95); Igor Vovchanchyn (IFC 1); Kimo Leopoldo (Ultimate Ultimate 96); Mark Kerr (World Vale Tudo Championship 3)

As far as we know, Paul Varelans is the only professional mixed martial artist to represent the art of trap fighting — whatever that is. Varelans fought 18 pro bouts over the course of his career, so we had plenty of opportunities to figure it out, but it was never clear what exactly was supposed to be trapped. As best as anybody could tell, trap fighting involved being absolutely enormous, and getting pasted by any and every name fighter you come up against. Varelans' size and his ability to take a beating were his calling cards, and while that didn't exactly translate into MMA success, it did earn him a relatively high-profile shoot-style **professional wrestling** bout against Peter "Taz" Senerchia, who worked a pseudo-MMA gimmick. According to the incredibly lurid autobiography of wrestling personality Missy Hyatt, Varelans was induced to lose the bout when Hyatt promised him a blow job. Afterward, in an impressive bit of wordplay, she then informed him that she didn't blow *jobbers*, the losers of pro wrestling matches. Varelans then apparently went berserk and trap fought the backstage area into complete disarray.

Vazquez, Javier

Nickname: Showtime

Height: 5'7"

Weight: 145-155 lbs

Born: 7/16/77

Debut: Neutral Grounds 5 (6/28/98) **Career Record:** 14-4

Notable Wins: Rumina Sato (Shooto: Treasure Hunt 7); Jens Pulver (WEC 47)

Notable Loss: Alberto Crane (KOTC 21)

Sometimes a fighter proves more in a loss than he ever could in a winning performance. That was never truer than during Javier Vazquez's dropped decision to Alberto Crane at **King of the Cage 21**. In the first 15 seconds, Vazquez's knee was ripped to shreds. It was a fluke injury, one of those strange things that happen occasionally in competitive sports. Vazquez's body was conditioned for war, his limbs ready to be twisted, punched, and kicked. Instead, his knee fell apart just by taking a hard step forward.

That's not the amazing part. The next 15 minutes were the miracle. Vazquez fought valiantly on a torn anterior cruciate ligament. His ACL was ripped, his knee virtually useless. Almost anyone else would have quit. Vazquez is a different kind of warrior. He decided to come forward and take the fight to Crane. Vazquez didn't just look to survive; he was actively pursuing submissions and even kneed Crane with his injured leg!

One of the top prospects in the world, Vazquez seemed to be on the path to recovery. He was training for his **UFC** debut against **Matt Serra** at **UFC 46** when his ACL again betrayed him. He retired from the sport, but competitive grappling wasn't enough to quench his desire for combat.

In 2007, Vazquez returned to MMA. He looked ready to pick up right where he left off, winning his first three fights and finally having an opportunity to compete at his natural weight class of 145 pounds. "Showtime" is again poised on the brink of big things.

In Their Own Words: Javier Vazquez on his retirement

"When I stopped, when I retired, I had just had my second daughter. She was a newborn and I also had her sister who was a year and a half old at the time. It was overwhelming and I had no time. But when I stopped fighting I missed it. I said, 'I am going to stop fighting, but I don't have to stop training.' But the more I trained, the more I wanted to fight again. Physically, this is the healthiest I've been in years. I'm ready to fight anybody. I think I can hang with the best guys in the world. All my fights have been at 155 pounds, and I'm finally getting a chance to fight in my weight class. Look out."

In Their Own Words: Ryan Bader on Cain's "Brown Pride"

"He's a great guy. You look at him and he's a big Mexican dude with 'Brown Pride' tattooed across his chest; he looks like he's a gangster. But he's a great guy. He's a family man now, just had a baby a little while ago. He's also one of the hardest working guys I've ever seen. Once he gets his mind set on something, he goes after it. He was at his first MMA fight just a week after [NCAA] Nationals. He's just one of those intense guys that says, 'When it's time to work, it's time to work.' But when you're just hanging out with him he's just a sweet guy."

Velasquez, Cain

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 240 lbs

Born: 7/28/82

Debut: Strikeforce: Tank vs. Buenteello (10/7/06)

Career Record: 8-0

Notable Wins: Cheick Kongo (UFC 99); Ben Rothwell (UFC 104); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (UFC 110)

Before he had ever stepped in the **UFC** Octagon, Cain Velasquez was already a legend in the insular MMA community. The kid was the ultimate gym warrior. Training at the American Kickboxing Academy, a camp filled to the brim with some of the best fighters in the world like **Josh Koscheck** and **Jon Fitch**, the two-time collegiate All-American still stood out. Manager Bob Cook couldn't find anyone willing to fight his young heavyweight. In his first two years, championing at the bit, Velasquez only had two fights, both first-round TKOs.

Cook and the team at AKA had wanted to develop the potential champion slowly, but not this slowly. They had wanted to wait on the UFC until Velasquez was ready to contend for a title, but instead had to sign him up to learn on the job; it was the only way to find him a fight.

UFC fans immediately understood what the buzz was all about. Velasquez showed a combination of slick striking and devastating **ground and pound** en route to convincing wins against an ever increasing caliber of opposition. First it was workmanlike fighters like Brad Morris, Jake O'Brien, and Denis Stojnic. Then it was fringe contenders like Cheick Kongo and Ben Rothwell. By the time Velasquez got his hands on the great **Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira**, knocking him out cleanly in the first round, a consensus began to form: if anyone has the tools to knock **Brock Lesnar** off his perch atop the UFC heavy-weight division, it's got to be Cain Velasquez.

Vera, Brandon

Nickname: The Truth

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 10/10/77

Debut: Excalibur Extreme Fight Challenge 11 (7/6/02)

Career Record: 11-5

Notable Wins: Frank Mir (UFC 65); Krzysztof Soszynski (UFC 102)

Notable Losses: Tim Sylvia (UFC 77); Fabricio Werdum (UFC 85); Keith Jardine (UFC 89); Randy Couture (UFC 105); Jon Jones (UFC Live: Vera vs. Jones)

It wasn't that long ago that Brandon Vera talked about becoming the first man to simultaneously hold the **UFC** heavyweight and light heavyweight titles. But after missing almost a year in the prime of his career due to a contract dispute, and dropping three of his first four fights upon his return to the **UFC**, Vera's prospects looked awfully different than they did when he rocketed up the heavyweight rankings with four straight finishes over tough competition — including former heavyweight champ **Frank Mir**.

A skilled striker and dangerous submission fighter, Vera wrestled at Old Dominion University and in the Air Force before being medically discharged after a serious elbow injury. His balanced, well-rounded game and his knack for the big finish, whether by knockout or submission, made him one of the hottest prospects in the sport — and he knew it. With only one fight left on his contract, Vera put himself in line for a heavyweight title shot with his first-round stoppage over Mir. But, understandably, the **UFC** has a policy of not offering title shots to fighters who have not committed to the company long-term. Vera didn't help his chances any by meeting with **EliteXC's** Gary Shaw, reportedly fielding offers from **Pride**, and publicly stating that the next contract he signed would be with "whoever wants to take care of [him] the best."

And so he sat. Until, soon after the MMA landscape changed with the **UFC's** acquisition of **Pride**, Vera fired his management and signed an extension that would see him back in action and keep him in the **UFC**. The time away from the cage didn't do him any favors, though, as the previously dynamic fighter was stalled out in an awful bout against former heavyweight champ **Tim Sylvia**, losing by unanimous decision. Vera dropped his next fight to **Fabricio Werdum**, although he was adamant that while he had been mounted and Werdum's shots were landing, the fight was stopped early. That may well be, but the Werdum fight was enough to convince Vera to finally make the much-discussed move down to 205 pounds. After a win over journeyman Reese Andy, Vera took a tough loss by split decision to **Keith Jardine**, whose awkward style kept Vera guessing much of the match. Subsequent wins over Mike Patt and

Krzysztof Soszynski put Vera back on track, but after a narrow loss to the legendary but ancient **Randy Couture** and a devastating defeat at the hands of rising star **Jon Jones**, it seems increasingly unlikely that “The Truth” will ever attain the level of success many observers once thought possible — and certainly that Vera predicted for himself.

Vitale, Falaniko

Nickname: Niko

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 1975

Debut: Rumble in the Cage 2 (10/15/99)

Career Record: 26-9

Notable Wins: Matt Lindland (UFC 43); Dave Menne (SuperBrawl 33); Yushin Okami (SuperBrawl 36); Masanori Suda (SuperBrawl 39)

Notable Losses: Matt Lindland (UFC 45); Robbie Lawler (SuperBrawl: Icon, Icon Sport: Lawler vs. Niko 2); Jason Miller (Icon Sport: Opposites Attract); Jeremy Horn (IFL: Oakland); Frank Trigg (Strikeforce: Payback)

Falaniko Vitale is probably best known for a fluke win over Olympic silver medalist **Matt Lindland** at **UFC 43**. Lindland was looking to throw Vitale and accidentally dropped himself on his own head. It was a knockout win for “Niko,” but not one he could be super-proud of. Lindland settled the score five months later, but it took him three rounds to do it. Vitale may have won the first fight in a comical fashion, but he was no joke.

A mixture of four nationalities (Samoan, Chinese, German, and Portuguese), Vitale is a tough former football player who learned the fight game from Hawaiian journeyman Ronald Jhun. Vitale came up before the fight game exploded into prominence with ***The Ultimate Fighter*** and was never able to make fighting his vocation. Despite a backbreaking job working construction and demolition, he trained hours every day and fought frequently. His crowning achievement was beating **Shooto** champion Masanori Suda in 2005, avenging his teacher Jhun’s loss and reestablishing himself as an international level fighter.

Since then, Vitale has fought some of the world’s best, including **Robbie Lawler** twice, always coming up short in his biggest fights. One thing is for certain: Vitale never leaves anything in the ring. That’s what makes him one of Hawaii’s most popular fighters. He may not beat the best, but they’ll know they’ve been in a fight.

Vovchanchyn, Igor

Nickname: Ice Cold

Height: 5'8"

Weight: 229 lbs

Born: 8/6/73

Debut: International Absolute Fighting Championship 1 (9/25/95)

Career Record: 47-9-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals); Enson Inoue (Pride 10); Mark Kerr (Pride 12)

Notable Losses: Mark Coleman (Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals); Heath Herring (Pride 19); Mirko Cro Cop (Pride Total Elimination 2003)

A short, stocky power puncher with an absolutely devastating overhand right, Igor Vovchanchyn was, for a time, the most dangerous heavyweight in the sport. Before making his **Pride** debut against **Gary Goodridge**, Vovchanchyn amassed a staggering 23-1-1 record fighting in Russia, Brazil, Israel, and his native Ukraine, ending all but one of his winning efforts with strikes (his only loss in this period came by one of the strangest submissions recorded in MMA: a chin to the eye).

Once in Pride, Vovchanchyn continued his feverish pace, running through Goodridge, **Akira Shoji**, and Carlos Bareto before finishing a prime **Mark Kerr** with knees to the head on the ground — a tactic that had been legal previously, and would be again, but had been specifically forbidden for Pride 7. The match was rightly ruled a no contest, but it was clear from Vovchanchyn's domination of the highly touted wrestler and **UFC** tournament champion that Igor was the man to beat heading into the Pride 2000 Grand Prix. Wins over Alexander Otsuka, Goodridge once more, and a valiant but exhausted **Kazushi Sakuraba** put Vovchanchyn in the tournament finals, but a legitimately shocking upset loss to **Mark Coleman** cost him the title.

Following the loss to Coleman, Vovchanchyn never truly regained his form. Over the later years of his career, Vovchanchyn managed a respectable 14-7 record and sensibly began to compete in Pride's middleweight (205 pounds) division rather than take on all comers as a heavyweight. But ultimately injury — especially an inability to properly open and close that once awesome right hand — took its toll and forced his retirement in 2005.



War Machine

Real name: Jon Koppenhaver

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 11/30/81

Debut: Total Combat 2 (2/29/04)

Career Record: 11-4

Notable Win: Jared Rollins (*The Ultimate Fighter 6* Finale)

Notable Loss: Yoshiyuki Yoshida (UFC 84)

Oh, War Machine. Will you ever learn?

Jon Koppenhaver's first contribution to modern culture came late in the sixth season of *The Ultimate Fighter* (*TUF*), when he helped introduce the audience to the fecal prank euphemistically known as "The Upper Decker." But this was only the beginning for the man who would legally change his name to War Machine after a copyright dispute with a **professional wrestling** company threatened to rob him of his cherished nickname. War Machine, you see, was no ordinary *TUF* mook. No, War Machine turned out to be the greatest *TUF* mook of them all.

Only two fights into a not particularly promising **UFC** career — an *Ultimate Fighter* finale win over Jared Rollins was followed by a first-minute loss to **Yoshiyuki Yoshida** — Koppenhaver somehow got the notion that he was in a position to pick his opponents. A dispute with matchmaker **Joe Silva** spelled the end for War Machine's UFC tenure. Well, that, and the MySpace post in which War Machine argued that **Evan Tanner**'s then-recent, tragic death was in fact a suicide directly stemming from the UFC's neglect of its former fighters. That didn't help.

Astoundingly, War Machine managed to outdo himself. In what has to be a first, the fighter (and wordsmith) was cut from the **Bellator** promotion before they ran a single show, after War Machine unleashed a subhuman, homophobic tirade against the newly inaugurated President Obama, going so far as to advocate not only *his* assassination, but the assassination of all future presidents. He later issued an apology, but the damage was done as far as ESPN's nascent promotion was concerned.

In Their Own Words: War Machine's MySpace post on Obama

Jan 20, 2009 10:32 PM

Subject: Fuck an Obama

I could care less about the mother fucker . . . everywhere I turn I have to see his face or hear his fuckin' name . . . wtf? And the liberals and the blacks are so happy because of "change"?? Ain't shit gonna change. All he is a rich white guy with a dark tan . . . lol Shittt. Fuck any president that was RICH before he came into office. How is some rich faggot gonna represent "the people" when he can't understand what it's like to struggle? I hope someone smokes that fucker and every president to come until they can actually give us a candidate that is truly one of THE PEOPLE.

WM

This is to say nothing of War Machine's legal troubles, the assault charges, the dustups at gay bars, the aborted foray into the world of pornography. No single thing defines him. War Machine is vast; he contains multitudes. But we get a glimpse of the mind inside the Machine in his MySpace entry on who he'd like to meet. In addition to bisexual women, War Machine would "like to meet the person who invented 'civilization' and then kill all of his descendants." That comes close to saying it all.

Waterman, Ron

Nickname: H₂O

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 280 lbs

Born: 11/23/68

Debut: Bas Rutten Invitational 1 (2/6/99)

Career Record: 16-6-2

Notable Wins: Valentijn Overeem (Pride 24); Kevin Randleman (Pride Final Conflict 2004); Ricco Rodriguez (WEC 16)

Notable Losses: Mirko Cro Cop (Pride 27); Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (Pancrase: Brave 10); Ricco Rodriguez (WFA: King of the Streets)

"I absolutely see myself as a warrior for God," Ron Waterman will tell you with the utmost sincerity. As part of the evangelical Team Impact ministry, which spreads the word through feats of strength and athleticism, the enormous Waterman will gladly tear a phone book in half or roll up a frying pan in His name. Waterman has that showman mentality that comes with being a



professional wrestler as well as an MMA fighter. He also has the cartoonish, body builder physique, but Waterman is hardly all show, no go. He possesses at least *some* go, as he demonstrated with submission wins over Valentijn Overeem and **Kevin Randleman** in **Pride**, and a decision win over **Ricco Rodriguez** (fat version). He holds the distinction of being the physically strongest man **Mirko Cro Cop** has ever faced, by Cro Cop's own admission — but he also holds the more dubious distinction of being on the wrong end of one of Cro Cop's most grisly soccer kick TKOs. It's a mixed bag, being Ron Waterman.

WEC: see **World Extreme Cagefighting**

Weir, Mark

Nickname: The Wizard

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 185 lbs

Born: 9/19/67

Debut: 1996

Career Record: 20-16-1

Notable Wins: Eugene Jackson (UFC 38); Johil De Oliveira (Cage Rage 8); Akira Shoji (Cage Rage 14)

Notable Losses: David Loiseau (UFC 42); Jorge Rivera (Cage Rage 7); Matt Lindland (Cage Rage 7); Denis Kang (Pride Bushido 10); Nick Thompson (BodogFight: Vancouver); Paul Daley (Cage Rage 23)

One of the few martial artists to migrate from point tae kwon do competition to MMA with some degree of success, Mark Weir was Britain's top prospect before **Michael Bisping**. Growing up as a black kid in England, Weir was often outnumbered and beaten bloody by his white neighbors. Then he learned to fight. After one explosive confrontation, he realized that fighting might not just be something he needed to survive — he might actually be good at it.

Tae kwon do championships followed, but Weir also focused on the practical application of martial arts techniques. When he saw the **UFC** and **Royce Gracie**, he wasn't too proud to admit that he might have something to learn from the Brazilian's ground technique.

Already almost 30, there was only so much catching up Weir could do. **Wrestling** and jiu-jitsu were hardly commonplace when he started fighting in 1996. By the time he was fighting full-time, Weir's standup game was as strong as his wrestling was weak. When the UFC held a card in London's Royal Albert Hall in 2002, Weir was one of the Brits tapped to add some local flavor to the show. Few expected him to beat Eugene Jackson, and no one would have predicted a knockout in just ten seconds.

The win earned Weir a spot in the UFC's middleweight division, but his next two fights made his weaknesses apparent to all. Weir was a match for anyone in a striking match. On the ground, however, he was vulnerable. What followed was an up-and-down career. Weir was a solid middle of the card attraction for Britain's **Cage Rage**, but wasn't able to beat the international level competition promoters brought in for him to face. As age diminished the strong skills standing he had possessed, Weir began a slide down the card. Still competing at 40-plus, Weir will be remembered as one of the earliest British fighters able to hold his own against the world's best, a necessary building block that made the rise of Michael Bisping and other British stars like Paul Daley and Dan Hardy possible.

Werdum, Fabricio

Nickname: Vai Cavalo

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 256 lbs

Born: 7/30/77

Debut: Millennium Brawl 7 (6/16/02)

Career Record: 14-4-1

Notable Wins: Gabriel Gonzaga (Jungle Fight 1, UFC 80); Alistair Overeem (Pride Total Elimination Absolute); Aleksander Emelianenko (2H2H: Pride & Honor); Brandon Vera (UFC 85); Fedor Emelianenko (Strikeforce: Fedor vs. Werdum)

Notable Losses: Sergei Kharitonov (Pride 30); Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (Pride Critical Countdown Absolute); Andrei Arlovski (UFC 70); Junior dos Santos (UFC 90)

When **Pride** first introduced us to Fabricio Werdum, it was in his role as **Mirko Cro Cop**'s **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu** coach. While that might not necessarily sound like the most impressive grappling credential, Werdum is not exactly hard up for those: a three-time Pan-American Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, three-time World Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, and **ADCC** weight class champion, Werdum is among the best submission heavyweight fighters in the sport.

His slick submission wins over the likes of **Alistair Overeem** and **Aleksander Emelianenko** whetted fans' appetite for Werdum's **UFC** debut against former champion **Andrei Arlovski**. Unfortunately, the two combined for one of the duller, least engaging high-profile **UFC** bouts in memory as both fighters did little but circle after the first round. It got so bad, in fact, that referee **Herb Dean** threatened both fighters with single-point deductions for passivity.

Werdum atoned for his listless debut loss with impressive **TKO** wins over both **Brandon Vera** and **Gabriel Gonzaga**, and seemed well on his way up the rankings of the somewhat thin **UFC** heavyweight division when disaster struck: a devastating, first-round upset **KO** at the hands of Junior Dos Santos left Werdum flat on his back and bounced from the **UFC**. He found new life in **Strikeforce**, however, with wins over Mike Kyle and the imposing **Antonio Silva**, setting the stage for his career-defining bout with the great **Fedor Emelianenko**, who had not been legitimately defeated in his near decade-long run atop the sport.

Seconds into their contest, Werdum stumbled and fell to his back, either reeling from Emelianenko's attack or baiting the Russian into his guard, depending on how you choose to read the exchange. As Emelianenko dove in to pursue his **ground and pound** attack, Werdum immediately began to hunt for a submission, locking a tight **triangle choke**, threatening all the while with an **arm bar**. For the first time in his **MMA** career, Fedor was forced to concede defeat. Werdum, widely respected in the sport not only for his technical abilities but for his class and dignity as well, was characteristically humble in victory: "Thank you, Fedor, for the opportunity. Fedor is the best in the world. This night, I beat Fedor, but Fedor is the best." Maybe Werdum is right. Maybe Fedor still is the best in the world despite what happened in that brief, thrilling encounter. Certainly, Werdum will enter their inevitable rematch as the underdog once again. But regardless of what happens then, or anywhere else down the line, for that matter, Werdum will forever be remembered as the man who finally proved that in this sport, anyone — yes, *anyone* — can be defeated.

White, Dana

Dana White is the best, most successful, and most important promoter in the history of MMA. No one else is even close. He took a sport that was floundering and made it a worldwide sensation. He took a company that was bleeding red, and turned it into a billion-dollar behemoth.

When White and childhood friends **Lorenzo and Frank Fertitta** took over the reins of the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, it was a company in a very bad place. They were giving away tickets in New Jersey, struggling to fill even modest arenas. The once popular pay-per-view spectacles were available only to fans with satellite television. Cable wouldn't touch them. Las Vegas, home of every fight that mattered, wouldn't touch them. It was a long road to respectability, let alone profitability. White helped them walk that road, struggling along the way and almost turning back, but eventually finding a way to bring cage fighting to the masses.

Dana White is a man who works hard for everything he has. Behind the scenes at a UFC event, White manages every aspect of the show, from the television production to the choice of music. Everything has to be perfect, and White has devoted his life to making sure that it is. Today White rolls around Las Vegas in a bad-ass Bentley, enjoying the spoils of his success. But it is his roots — the single mother who raised him, the crappy jobs as a doorman and in construction — that really drive him.

Less than a decade ago, White was a struggling **boxing** manager, looking for a break and teaching boxercise classes in his gym to make a living. He dreamed about being a famous boxing promoter like Don King or Bob Arum — ironic considering his long-running feud with the sport of boxing and everyone involved in it — and now he's living that dream. It's just been altered a bit: sped up and amped up violence for a new generation of fight fans.

For White, the pieces seemed to fall into place. He was reacquainted with the Fertitta brothers, thanks to Lorenzo's work with the Nevada State Athletic Commission. The three became interested in MMA after a chance meeting with jiu-jitsu ace **John Lewis** at a nightclub. White took on some of the MMA fighters he met, most notably **Tito Ortiz** and **Chuck Liddell**, as clients. During a particularly rough contract negotiation with UFC owner Bob Meyrowitz, White learned the company might be for sale. A few phone calls to the billionaire Fertittas later, the UFC had brand new owners. The company, valued at more than a billion dollars today, was purchased at the cut-rate price of \$3 million. White was given a ten percent ownership stake, at the time virtually worthless. That ten percent has made him a multimillionaire, but those millions were hard earned. And success was no guarantee as the new company,

called **Zuffa**, would soon find out.

In the beginning, White struggled to find his way. The two primary goals were to get back on pay-per-view nationwide and to become regulated and approved to run shows in Nevada. Las Vegas was the fighter's mecca. Without Vegas the promotion would never seem like a big deal. Without pay-per-view, the promotion would never count big bills.

Amazingly, they achieved these goals in the first year; everyone in the company expected these triumphs to be a license to print money. Instead, the show continued to flounder. The first UFC to play to a wide audience, live on pay-per-view and emanating from the Mandalay Bay Events Center, was a colossal disaster. The action wasn't compelling, many fans didn't recognize the new generation of fighters, and the show went over on time, causing many to miss the end of the final match and costing the promotion millions. It was clear that White had a lot to learn.

The big break that made the UFC a financial and pop culture juggernaut almost slipped right through White's grasp. No one disputes that ***The Ultimate Fighter*** reality show saved the promotion that until that point was hemorrhaging money. But what many don't know is that the television breakthrough was almost an opportunity missed. Some in the promotion wanted to run a different reality series, one called *American Promoter*, that would focus on the charismatic UFC boss and the day-to-day operations of running the UFC. While it would have no doubt been a great showcase for White, it wouldn't have produced a new generation of young superstars and wouldn't have created the perfect platform for promoting the pay-per-view fights. White had an important decision to make: which show would he choose? The one that would make him an icon, or the one that was better for business? He went with the one better for the industry, and the rest was history.

White really came into his own once the promotion started to thrive. It had taken more than four years for White and Zuffa to rise to the top of the sport. Once he was there, he solidified his hold on the American market with a



ruthless streak and an iron grip. There was never any doubt that White was the boss. He responded to any challenges with a brutality that was unprecedented in the sport. White didn't have competitors; he had enemies.

White didn't just vanquish all comers — he demolished them, then rubbed it in their faces. A rogue's gallery of promoters, including Gary Shaw, Jay Larkin, Calvin Ayre, and Tom Atencio were not just humbled; they were verbally lambasted by the foul-mouthed UFC frontman. To White, these other men were simply trying to cash in on what he created. This was his life. No one else seemed to have his level of commitment. He beat them in court, in the ratings, on pay-per-view, everywhere he could.

His unquestioned passion was a key component in building the UFC to heights unimagined in the **SEG** era. Once the company was negotiating with Fortune 500 partners and in the public limelight, White's hard charging manner became a liability. In 2009 White, a man normally so good at controlling the story, became the story. He attacked **Sherdog** reporter Loretta Hunt in a video posted on YouTube, at the same time slandering homosexuals and generally coming off as a thug.

White had a fine line to walk. Fans enjoyed his profane and over-the-top act, but there had to be limits. Going forward, White would be dealing with bigger fish than “scumbag Hollywood agents” and recalcitrant fighters. He would be dealing with television executives, major media pundits, and big-time advertisers. It was a whole new game . . . but few who knew him had any doubts that Dana White would find all the angles, taking himself and the UFC straight into the American mainstream and, from there, to the world.

White, Vernon

Nickname: Tiger

Height: 6'

Weight: 205 lbs

Born: 12/3/71

Debut: Pancrase: Yes, We Are Hybrid Wrestlers 1 (9/21/93)

Career Record: 26-34-10

Notable Wins: Yoshiki Takahashi (Pancrase: Truth 3); Vladimir Matyushenko (IFC: Montreal Caged Combat)

Notable Losses: Bas Rutten (Pancrase: Pancrash! 3); Pedro Rizzo (World Vale Tudo Championship 2); Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride 2); Chuck Liddell (UFC 49); Lyoto Machida (WFA: King of the Streets)

Vernon White is a product of the old school. Before there was even a **Lion's Den**, White trained with **Ken Shamrock** inside a racquetball court at a local gym. The training was rudimentary. Students took a beating from Shamrock,

either learning to defend themselves or leaving. There was no third option. White learned, enough that Shamrock was comfortable bringing him with him to Japan for the debut of **Pancrase**.

The Japanese ring announcers made love to his name, even in an era that predated Lenny Hardt's memorable and seemingly minute-long odes to the warriors of **Pride**. It was an introduction that exceeded what was sure to follow in the ring or cage. "Vereeeenon 'Tiger' White-o" was fun to say, but less fun to watch in his early matches.

White struggled in his early matches, losing seven of his first eight. He came from a tae kwon do background and had a hard time when the fight went to the ground. He learned quickly though, eventually defeating one of Pancrase's founders **Minoru Suzuki** and earning a shot at the newly formed Pride Fighting Championship. He fell to a rising star named **Kazushi Sakuraba**.

It's been the pattern White's career has followed everywhere he's gone. He's capable of defeating other journeyman and occasionally a mid-level fighter like Vladimir Matyushenko, but he's always lost to world-class competition. White is essentially an MMA nomad, the ultimate journeyman. He was there for the very first show in Japan and seems to show no signs of slowing down.



Whatever else he might be, White is an exceedingly loyal friend, as Ken Shamrock found with the Lion's Den. When every member of the team had long ago moved on, to new careers or new fight teams, White remained. He's always there, watching Ken's back and grooming the next generation of fighters.

Williams, Pete

Nickname: El Duro

Height: 6'3"

Weight: 237 lbs

Born: 7/10/75

Debut: Pancrase: 1996 Neo-Blood Tournament (7/23/96)

Career Record: 11-6

Notable Win: Mark Coleman (UFC 17)

Notable Losses: Yuki Kondo (Pancrase: 1996 Neo-Blood Tournament Round 2);

Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (UFC 17.5); Kevin Randleman (UFC 23); Frank Mir (UFC 36)

Pete Williams was a grappler, which is what made the ridiculous so sublime. When he kicked former **Olympian Mark Coleman** right in the grill, it was truly surprising. Who could have predicted that MMA's signature knockout would come from Pete Williams, better known for his **knee bar** than his high kick?

Once the biggest knockout in the history of MMA, it has now been replaced on highlight reels by **Gabriel Gonzaga's** decapitation of **Mirko Cro Cop** or **Rashad Evans'** colossal kick to the dome of Sean Salmon. Now Williams, and even his shining moment in the spotlight, has been largely forgotten.

Williams was a high school teammate of **Jerry Bohlander** and followed his friend to **Ken Shamrock's Lion's Den**. Together they joined Jason DeLucia and **Frank Shamrock** as part of a clique that terrorized new fighters with the temerity to try to join the legendary team.

Like his teammates, Williams had immediate success in the new sport of MMA. He won the second **SuperBrawl** tournament in Hawaii and shocked the world with his knockout of Coleman, one of the most dominating wrestlers of the era. It was his single marquee win. Every other fight with a legitimate opponent ended in defeat. He lost to **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka** in a match to crown a number one contender for the heavyweight title and later dropped a boring decision to **Kevin Randleman** in a match for the vacant **UFC** belt.

After a brief foray to **King of the Cage**, where he dominated two over-matched opponents, Williams made a final run at UFC glory. He lost three in a row, all decisively, and left the business for good. Like many of the products of the Lion's Den, Williams had trained too hard, pushing himself physically and mentally further than could possibly be healthy. At the age of 27, he was

exhausted. Williams left the sport, never to return. Today he makes his living as a chef, presumably in a restaurant where no one ever has the courage to send anything back to the kitchen.

World Extreme Cagefighting

The furiously fast back-and-forth action between **Urijah Faber** and Jeff Curran was one thing. It was an exciting fight, but we'd seen fast-paced fights in the **UFC's** lightweight division too. It was the jumping knee by Faber, while Curran was holding his other leg looking for a takedown, that really made fans sit up and take notice. These guys were on a whole different level, fighting with a swiftness and ferocity that would put Usain Bolt to shame.

Although the **WEC** made its live television debut in June 2007, the promotion has actually been around since 2001. Before they showcased the very best in the world at 135 and 145 pounds, the **WEC** was just another respectable California-based independent promotion. They held almost every one of their 24 events at the Tachi Palace Hotel and Casino in Lemoore, California, and were best known for hosting **Frank Shamrock's** return to MMA action in 2003.



In Their Own Words: WEC President Reed Harris on changing focus

"When we decided to focus on the lighter weights we knew we had our work cut out for us. But if you look at boxing for example, it took many years, but now the lightweight guys are the guys everybody is interested in. If you look at the time frame, I only started really focusing on the lightweights about eight months ago. Now look where we are at. Everyone in the MMA industry says the best lightweights in the world fight for WEC. I get calls from across the world, from Japan, from Korea, from Brazil, with coaches saying, 'I've got lightweight fighters we want to bring into the WEC, because these guys want to fight the best.' It used to be the other way around. We used to have to chase after them."

The WEC was purchased in 2006 by **Zuffa**, parent company of the UFC. It was an interesting move, during a period in MMA history full of intrigue and backroom dealings. The Japanese promotion **Pride** had lost their network television deal, victims of a magazine exposé that revealed ties to organized crime. The promotion was for sale, and although Pride had struggled to gain a foothold in the American market, Zuffa didn't want to take any chances with a competitor acquiring Pride's legendary fighters and securing a national television deal. They made a pre-emptive strike, buying the WEC from Reed Harris and Scott Adams and signing the group to a long-term contract with the Versus network, preventing anyone who bought Pride from making the same deal.

It was all moot. The UFC actually ended up buying Pride, folding the group into their existing organization. Pride was out of the picture, but Zuffa found themselves the proud owners of a second active MMA promotion after all their defensive maneuvering: the WEC.

It took some time for the revamped company to find its identity and make its mark. They knew they didn't want to be UFC Lite, a breeding ground or minor league for talent that eventually "graduated" to the UFC. Although they were resistant to the idea at first, WEC officials eventually agreed to focus only on the lighter weight classes, dropping the 205-, 185-, and 170-pound divisions. Instead of featuring second-rate champions in these divisions, the WEC became an American **Shooto**, a promotion that showcased the top lighter-weight fighters in the world.

The star of the early shows was Faber, a bronzed surfer type from southern California who happened to be one of the most exciting fighters in all of MMA. The WEC was blessed with the chance to match Faber with a UFC star,

former lightweight champion **Jens Pulver**. Pulver was way past his expiration date, but had an established name. Faber's five round dismantling of the aging veteran immediately gave him credibility with fans. It was a true star-making performance, one that has made Faber as a legitimate television draw.

Other astounding performances soon followed. **Miguel Torres**, Jose Aldo, **Mike Brown**, **Brian Bowles**, and Donald Cerrone helped make sure no WEC was without its magical moments. The promotion, however, had seemingly peaked early. The show was getting solid ratings and putting on great fights. There was only one way to move forward, to push the WEC to the next level: promoting on pay-per-view, something Harris pulled the trigger on in 2010.

The first pay-per-view, promoted heavily by **Dana White** and the whole Zuffa team, didn't bear the promotion's name so it could be sold on both the Versus and Spike television networks. It may not have been labeled "WEC" but there was no mistaking the action in the cage. The show, main evented by Urijah Faber and **Jose Aldo**, was a typical WEC barnburner — all action, all the time. Well received by the media and the fans, it seemed a follow up was likely.

World Fighting Alliance

It's best to think of the World Fighting Alliance (WFA) as two completely distinct organizations that just happened to promote MMA events under the same name. The first incarnation of the WFA was operated by John Lewis and John Huntington, and billed itself as "Where the fight club meets the nightclub." With laser light shows, go-go dancers, extra-sleazy ring girls — even Ice-T one time! — WFA put on three shows at The Joint in Las Vegas's Hard Rock Hotel starting in November 2001. After their disastrous third show a year later, where accredited photographers were inexplicably displaced from ringside and, in some cases, ejected from the building entirely, the WFA ruined its relationship with the MMA media, and a fourth show never materialized. The company returned in name only in 2006 under the direction of Ross Goodman and Louis Palazzo, and dove headlong into the free-agent market, coming away with **Quinton Jackson**, **Lyoto Machida**, and **Matt Lindland**; they even had **Bas Rutten** on board for a comeback fight. After a solid but sparsely attended first show bombed on pay-per-view, that was pretty much it for the second incarnation of the World Fighting Alliance, which sold off a number of its assets to the **UFC** — including the contracts of Jackson and Machida, both future light heavyweight champions. Ice-T's future in the sport remains uncertain.

World Victory Road: Sengoku

The demise of **Pride** in late 2007 permanently altered the landscape of Japanese mixed martial arts. The longstanding Pride and K-1 rivalry was over, and the consolidation of top Pride fighters and executives under K-1's **Dream** banner in early 2008 seemed to indicate the direction of the sport in the land of the rising sun. Dream had the fighters, they had the promotional muscle, and, perhaps most importantly, they had the prime time network TV contract with TBS (Tokyo Broadcast System). The upstart World Victory Road organization managed to snag three significant native Japanese stars: **Kazuo Misaki**, just as his feud with **Yoshihiro Akiyama** made him a hero; **Takanori Gomi**, around whom Pride had built its Bushido series of events; and **Hidehiko Yoshida**, a battered and ancient **judo** hero who nevertheless remained a solid draw and a major player. But with their only exposure coming through a 30-minute block on the relatively minor TV Tokyo, it didn't seem like they'd be anything but small-time.

But while K-1 has struggled to satisfy TBS with its Dream ratings, World Victory Road has made their Sengoku series work on a smaller scale. They've been canny and clever every step of the way. Take the "Sengoku" name to begin with; the word literally translates to something akin to "fighting mastery," but is simultaneously a homophonic reference to the feudal Japanese period of warring states. That's hardly the reason for their success, but given the general mindlessness of MMA promotion names and event titles, Sengoku borders on genius. Just as clever, but much more significant, was World Victory Road's decision to differentiate themselves from the kind of freak show matchups that Dream promoted, and focus on a more straight-ahead sport product. This meant, in addition to promoting its stars from the Pride era, rounding out their cards with as many elite amateur combat athletes as they could muster — **Olympians** wherever possible.

They landed the biggest catch of all when Beijing heavyweight judo gold medalist and All-Japan champion Satoshi Ishii ended his flirtations with the much higher profile **UFC** and Dream and surprisingly opted for the slow-but-steady World Victory Road instead. After announcing his retirement from competitive judo at age 22, Ishii became the hottest Japanese free agent in the sport. After Ishii agreed to a New Year's Eve match with Hidehiko Yoshida, rumors that had already been swirling for months began to gain more momentum still. Will TBS drop Dream and replace them with Sengoku? Or is Fuji TV, which hasn't carried mixed martial since its profound embarrassment over the Pride yakuza scandal, at last interested in returning to that kind of programming in prime time? Only time will tell. But as Dream stumbles, World Victory Road rolls on.

Wrestling

Although Brazilian **Vale Tudo** rightly receives much of the credit, it certainly wasn't the only influence on modern mixed martial arts. Thousands of years earlier, during the Roman occupation of Britain, men were wrestling, using submission locks and chokes in brutal competitions very similar to modern grappling tournaments. The art was called Lancashire wrestling, and it was a bit too rough for the Roman invaders, who preferred their tamer style with its emphasis on throws and pins, today called Greco-Roman wrestling.

Lancashire wrestling was the founding father of **catch wrestling**, which, in turn, spawned American folkstyle wrestling. When you think about wrestling in mixed martial arts, it's this style that predominates. Called "scholastic wrestling" because it is primarily practiced in high schools and colleges, this form of wrestling is catch wrestling with most of the dangerous elements removed. Throws are less violent and submissions are illegal, making control the primary aim of the art. Folkstyle wrestlers seek to control their opponent on the mat, winning either by pinfall or by scoring points for manoeuvres that showed dominance or helped put them in position to secure a victory.

While this kind of wrestling couldn't help a competitor finish a fight, it could certainly help put him in a position to do so. From almost the very beginning, wrestlers found a happy home in MMA competition. While **Dan Severn**, an NCAA All-American, lost to **Royce Gracie** at **UFC 4**, he showed exactly how dominant his art form could be in the future. For much of their 15-minute fight, Severn was in complete control, holding Gracie on the mat and restraining his every action. It was only Severn's lack of killer instinct that allowed Gracie the time to secure the fight-ending **triangle choke** from the bottom, much to announcer **Jeff Blatnick**'s chagrin and **Jim Brown**'s delight.

It was **Mark Coleman**, a 1992 **Olympian**, who really showed just how dominating a truly outstanding wrestler could be. Coleman was walking testosterone. Unlike Severn, when he took an opponent to the mat, he made them pay. Coleman originated the **ground and pound** technique, taking an opponent to the mat and then simply pounding him until he broke. With head butts being legal at the time, Coleman was unstoppable, even in the vaunted **Brazilian Jiu-jitsu guard** (see **positional hierarchy**). Rule changes and a failure to adapt prevented Coleman from reaching his full potential (although winning a UFC title and the 2000 **Pride Grand Prix** is nothing to be ashamed of), but he opened the door for countless wrestlers to follow.

The most important advantage excellent wrestling gives a fighter in MMA is the ability to dictate where the fight takes place. Some wrestlers, like Coleman, Severn, **Mark Kerr**, and **Kevin Randleman**, prefer the fight to take place

on the mat. Despite the chance of falling victim to a submission lock, they feel in control there and are happy to risk the lock in exchange for the opportunity to ground and pound. Others, like **Chuck Liddell**, prefer to use their wrestling skills to prevent opponents from taking them to the mat. Liddell, **Jens Pulver**, and **Dan Henderson** are just a few of the many wrestlers preferring to employ **sprawl and brawl**. These heavy-handed wrestlers like to keep things standing, feeling they are better able to deal with submission experts on their feet with developing striking games.

Whichever style they prefer, it's their wrestling skills that make it possible for these fighters to impose their will on an opponent. It's this ability to dictate where the fight takes place that makes wrestling one of the most important, and undervalued, skills in all of mixed martial arts.



Yamada, Keiichi

Nickname: Jushin "Thunder" Liger **Height:** 5'7"
Weight: 208 lbs **Born:** 11/10/64
Debut: Pancrase: Spirit 8 (11/30/02) **Career Record:** 0-1
Notable Loss: Minoru Suzuki (Pancrase Spirit 8)

In 1989, pro wrestler Keiichi Yamada ceased to exist; he was replaced by the extravagantly masked Jushin "Thunder" Liger. The original Liger was a cartoon character with remarkable powers. Liger the professional wrestler was almost as impressive, flying around the ring and taking the inherent risks of **professional wrestling** to unfathomable heights.

None of those powers seemed present when Liger made his MMA debut in **Pancrase**. He tried his trademark rolling koppa kick, a technique many Japanese pro wrestlers use to start fights, just to, you know, show the world they are pro wrestlers. For Liger this went horribly awry. He missed badly and never recovered. **Minoru Suzuki** mounted him and eventually choked him out. It was the first and final fight for Liger, but also the last legitimate fight of Suzuki's career. The Pancrase legend hung up his boots, only to put on identical boots when he joined the pro wrestling world just days later.

Yamamoto, Kid

Real name: Norifumi Yamamoto **Height:** 5'4"
Weight: 143 lbs **Born:** 3/15/77
Debut: Shooto: To the Top 2 (3/2/01) **Career Record:** 18-3 (1 No Contest)
Notable Wins: Royler Gracie (Hero's 3); Caol Uno (Hero's 3); Genki Sudo (Dynamite!! 2005)
Notable Loss: Joe Warren (Dream 9)

Norifumi "Kid" Yamamoto is one of the biggest stars in Japanese MMA. Figuratively speaking, that is — at only 5'4" he's quite literally the smallest.

But before he ill-advisedly left the sport in his prime to chase an Olympic freestyle **wrestling** dream, Yamamoto's name would often come up in discussions of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the sport. With serious wrestling credentials, sound submission fighting, and an ability to hang with the best in the world in straight kickboxing, that kind of talk was well founded.

Yamamoto's skills couldn't be criticized. His arrogance and hostility, on the other hand, definitely could. On more than one occasion, Yamamoto showed dangerous disregard for the protocols of the sport and complete disdain for his opponents by continuing to pound away on his hapless foes despite the referee's attempts to intervene. Kid was a problem — and the Japanese audience couldn't get enough of him. A New Year's Eve 2004 kickboxing match against Masato, Japan's best, drew a 31.6 rating. Despite giving up over ten pounds and fighting under his opponent's rules, Yamamoto went the distance and even scored a knockdown in the first round. Two years later, an easy win in an MMA match against Hungarian Olympic gold medalist Istvan Majoros produced a 25.0 rating. Both matches remain among the most watched in Japanese television history.

Kid's crowning achievement was the **Hero's** 2005 middleweight (154 pounds) Grand Prix, a tournament he breezed through despite coming into the ring significantly lighter than all three of his highly regarded opponents: **Royler Gracie**, **Caol Uno**, and **Genki Sudo**. None of them made it out of the second round against the ferocious Yamamoto, although it's worth noting that the Sudo stoppage in the first round of the tournament final seemed somewhat premature.

Since then, everything with Yamamoto has seemed a little off. First came his decision in late 2006 to take a leave of absence from mixed martial arts to follow in the footsteps of his father, a 1972 **Olympian** in freestyle wrestling. The timing seemed very strange: Yamamoto was at the peak of his popularity, and hadn't competed in freestyle in the eight years since a bizarre incident involving the yakuza and a pellet gun ultimately led to his expulsion from university and the end of his amateur career. Predictably, his return to the sport didn't go well: an arm-whip takedown dislocated his right elbow only seconds into his semi-final match in the 132-pound division of The Emperor's Cup event in Tokyo.

Then came scandal. In 2008, *Shukan Gendai*, the news magazine that essentially took down **Pride**, published a report detailing alleged "marijuana parties" hosted by Yamamoto. Neighbors complained to police about "sweet herbal smells" and "cars in the driveway playing reggae music." Although police searches failed to turn anything up, the allegations alone

were a real problem for Yamamoto, given Japanese cultural attitudes towards marijuana use.

Slowed by injury, Yamamoto has fought only sporadically since his return to the sport. In mid-2009, Kid suffered his first MMA loss in seven years when Joe Warren — an American Greco-Roman wrestling world champion whose Olympic dreams were derailed by a positive test for THC — controlled the Japanese star en route to a split decision win. It's hard to say where Yamamoto goes from here. When Japanese MMA was at its peak, Kid Yamamoto was at his. Now both have fallen on comparatively hard times.

Yamma Pit Fighting

The brainchild of the original **UFC** owner **Bob Meyrowitz**, Yamma Pit Fighting was one of the most disastrous shows in the long, proud lineage of terrible MMA events. It all started with the name. “Yamma” roughly translates from Russian as “pit.” That made the name of the event “Pit Pit Fighting.”

True to their word, promoters did indeed put the fighters in a pit. Instead of a mere cage, the Yamma was a mat with a sloped orange ring leading up several feet to a cage. Intended to keep the action moving and avoid fighters leaning up against the cage, the new structure instead assured every fight would feature combatants awkwardly grappling on an incline. The slope made preventing the takedown impossible. Instead of creating a more exciting brand of fighting, the pit guaranteed fights decided by timid takedowns and careful positioning. It's not clear if that is the revolution designers had in mind when they created the Yamma.

An event like Yamma Pit Fighting wouldn't be complete without an announcing team worthy of its stature. In this case, it was a reunion of past UFC playcallers, bringing together a slightly embarrassed Bruce Beck, a clueless **Jeff Blatnick**, and the amazing **John Perretti**. Perhaps the least popular personality in MMA history, Perretti always called it like he saw it. On this night he seemed only to see glutes and amazing calves. He seemed to be willing **Kevin Randleman** to appear, but it never happened. In the history of creepy performances, this may have outcreeped them all.

It was as if the whole promotion had been transported in time from a decade gone by. The main event was **Oleg Taktarov** versus **Mark Kerr** — a great fight in 1998, but an embarrassing spectacle in 2008. At least it was better than the other “Masters” fight, a contest between a 400-plus-pound Eric “Butterbean” Esch and UFC 11 veteran **Pat Smith**. Even the tournament, designed to crown a new young star, ended with Travis Wiuff as the winner. Wiuff was hardly a rising star. He was a 30-year-old journeyman with 11

losses in a nondescript career. He, needless to say, failed to impress with his awful **lay and pray** wins.

The shining light eclipsing this dismal display, was ring announcer Scott Ferrall. Ferrall is apparently a radio personality, despite sounding like he swallowed glass. His performance was among the worst things MMA ever thrust upon the world — worse than all the tattoos and horrible T-shirts combined. Even the referees weren't spared his aural assault. "Kevin Mulhall will be our referee for this beautiful matchup of warriors and freaks ready to pound and dance," Ferrall exclaimed.

A second Yamma show, announced for June 2008, never took place.

Yoon, Dong Sik

Height: 6'

Weight: 198 lbs

Born: 8/24/72

Debut: Pride Total Elimination 2005 (4/23/05)

Career Record: 5-7

Notable Win: Melvin Manhoef (Dynamite!! USA)

Notable Losses: Kazushi Sakuraba (Pride Total Elimination 2005); Quinton Jackson (Pride 31); Murilo Bustamante (Pride Bushido 13); Gegard Mousasi (Dream 4)

At first it seemed like Dong Sik Yoon was a victim of bad timing, a fighter who had what it took to succeed but who was never able to put it all together when it counted most. It's a reputation that followed him from an international **judo** career that saw him earn victories over some of the biggest names in the sport, and win some of the most prestigious and competitive tournaments in the world, but never put everything together when it counted to earn an Olympic berth.

When he made his MMA debut against the legendary but fading **Kazushi Sakuraba** and was knocked out early, it was easy to write it off as a learning experience. When he went the distance in his next fight, against Olympic judo champion Makoto Takimoto, it seemed as though he was starting to learn the ropes. And after dropping competitive decisions to first-rate, championship-caliber mixed martial artists like **Quinton Jackson** and **Murilo Bustamante**, more than one observer noted that Yoon Dong Sik had to be the best o-4 fighter in the history of the sport.

Yoon evened out his record by rattling off four straight wins, most notably over the ferocious Dutch kickboxer **Melvin Manhoef**. Three of these wins came by way of **arm bar**, completely run-of-the-mill applications of the technique that were nevertheless taken up by posters at **The Underground** and quickly celebrated as "The Dongbar." Urbandictionary.com defines the

Dongbar as “an arm bar applied by Dong Sik Yoon and rumored to have been taught to him by God who, momentarily, found himself caught in one and was obliged to tap.” Although the sources of these rumors are undisclosed, they seem credible.

But before Dongbar-mania could truly take hold, Yoon was back to old form, going the distance against rising star **Gegard Mousasi** in a losing effort. Subsequent losses to the undistinguished Andrews Nakahara and **TUF** alum Jesse “JT Money” Taylor suggested that Yoon, at 37 years of age, might soon be finished. The Dongbar, glorious while it lasted, might not be ours to gaze upon much longer. Cherish it today.

Yoshida, Hidehiko

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 225 lbs

Born: 9/3/69

Debut: Pride 23 (11/24/02)

Career Record: 9-8-1

Notable Wins: Don Frye (Pride 23); Kiyoshi Tamura (Pride Total Elimination 2003); Mark Hunt (Pride Critical Countdown 2004); Naoya Ogawa (Pride Shockwave 2005); Satoshi Ishii (Dynamite!! 2009)

Notable Losses: Wanderlei Silva (Pride Final Conflict 2003, Pride Total Elimination 2005); Rulon Gardner (Pride Shockwave 2004); Josh Barnett (Sengoku 1); Kazuhiro Nakamura (ASTRA)

As **Nobuhiko Takada**’s contests against **Rickson Gracie** mercifully receded into memory, and **Kazushi Sakuraba**’s willingness to fight much larger opponents began to catch up with him, Hidehiko Yoshida emerged as **Pride**’s top Japanese star. Unlike his predecessors in that role, who came from the world of **professional wrestling**, Yoshida entered MMA as a decorated **judo** player. A 1992 Olympic gold medalist in Barcelona (-78 kg) and world judo champion in 1999 (-90 kg), a slightly battered Yoshida reached the end of a long and distinguished international career at the age of 32 and took to the ring against MMA pioneer **Royce Gracie** in front of over 90,000 fans at Shockwave 2002.

Yoshida and Gracie fought under rules modified to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Royce’s father **Helio Gracie**’s grappling match against judo legend **Masahiko Kimura**. Strikes to the head were forbidden, but, perhaps more importantly, the rules Gracie requested specified that the referee had no power to stop the match. However, when Gracie appeared to fall limp under Yoshida’s sode guruma jime or **Ezequiel choke**, the referee intervened and awarded the match to Yoshida. The Tokyo fans were ecstatic; the Gracies were irate; and more than a few observers thought Pride was protecting their new star.

That Yoshida was the beneficiary of either fixed or worked fights was never substantiated, and seems dubious in hindsight, but the notion plagued the early part of his career. Submission wins over **Don Frye** and **Kiyoshi Tamura** — seriously accomplished legitimate fighters, but also professional wrestlers — weren't enough to convince skeptics that Yoshida was for real. But a stirring loss to **Wanderlei Silva**, in which Yoshida went toe-to-toe with the dominant Pride middleweight (205 pounds) champion in one of the best fights of 2003, seemed to do the trick. Less than two months after that punishing decision loss, Yoshida was again paired with Gracie, this time fighting to a draw that would have been a Gracie win but for Gracie's insistence that no judges score the bout.

Yoshida went the distance with Silva one more time, losing a split decision in their 2005 rematch. Impressively, Yoshida was again unafraid to stand and trade with one of the most feared strikers in the sport. Over the course of four dominant years, Silva finished 13 consecutive fights at 205 pounds by knockout or TKO, with the exception of the Yoshida bouts that went the distance, making this pair of losses Yoshida's greatest achievement in his second career.

That, and getting seriously paid: Yoshida received \$2 million for his New Year's Eve bout against judo rival and fellow ratings draw **Naoya Ogawa** in one of the most watched fights in Japanese history, and Yoshida's decision loss to 2000 Olympic Greco-Roman **wrestling** gold medalist Rulon Gardner found an even bigger audience.

In the dying days of Pride, a battered Yoshida perhaps foolishly tried his hand against a streaking **Mirko Cro Cop** and paid the price, while the first **Sengoku** card saw him drop an entertaining contest to the bigger, younger, and much better **Josh Barnett**. Although his skills had seriously declined with advancing age and an ever-expanding waistline, old man Yoshida had just enough left in the tank to get the best of debuting Olympic judo champ Satoshi Ishii in a high profile New Year's Eve 2009 contest. In April 2010, Yoshida announced his retirement after a loss to longtime student **Kazuhiro Nakamura** contested at the celebrated Nippon Budokan — a fitting place for the venerable judoka to take his final bow.

Yoshida, Yoshiyuki

Nickname: Zenko

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 170 lbs

Born: 5/10/74

Debut: Shooto 2005 in Kitazawa Town Hall (2/6/05)

Career Record: 11-5

Notable Wins: Satoru Kitaoka (Pancrase: Brave 10); Akira Kikuchi (GCM: Cage Force 4)

Notable Losses: Josh Koscheck (UFC: Fight for the Troops); Anthony Johnson (UFC 104)

Twice in his career, **judo** fighter Yoshiyuki Yoshida has been carried out of the cage on a stretcher. Oddly enough, the first time was in victory: a brutal **ground and pound** win over former **Shooto** champion **Akira Kikuchi** earned Yoshida a bout with Dan Hardy in the finals of the 2007 **Cage Force** welterweight tournament, a match Yoshida won by disqualification when Hardy inadvertently landed a truly epic kick to the groin.

On the strength of that tournament win, Yoshida made his **UFC** debut against Jon Koppenhaver (or **War Machine**, if you prefer) at the relatively advanced age of 34. Yoshida made short work of the controversial **TUF** also-ran, tossing him with a huge harai goshi hip throw and choking him into unconsciousness with a deft anaconda choke (see **arm triangle**), all inside the fight's first minute.

Karo Parisyan's eleventh-hour withdrawal from a scheduled match amid various physical (and perhaps psychological) ailments cost Yoshida a shot against a perennial welterweight contender, but Yoshida found another such opportunity soon thereafter, matched against **Josh Koscheck**. And that would lead to stretcher number two. Midway through the first round, Koscheck landed two big right hands, the first of which staggered Yoshida, the second of which turned out the lights.

A subsequent **guillotine choke** win over former Navy SEAL Brandon Wolff suggests that Yoshida may have found his level: he's capable of finishing second-tier fighters with relative ease, but probably out of his depth against the best in the world.

Yvel, Gilbert

Nickname: The Hurricane

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 235 lbs

Born: 6/30/76

Debut: Rings Holland: The Final Challenge (2/2/97)

Career Record: 36-15-1 (1 No Contest)

Notable Wins: Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (Rings: Rise 2); Semmy Schilt (Rings Holland: The Kings of the Magic Ring); Kiyoshi Tamura (Rings: Millennium Combine 1); Gary Goodridge (Pride 10); Cheick Kongo (It's Showtime: Amsterdam)

Notable Losses: Dan Henderson (Rings: King of Kings 99); Vitor Belfort (Pride 9); Igor Vovchanchyn (Pride 14); Don Frye (Pride 16); Jeremy Horn (Pride 21); Josh Barnett (Affliction: Day of Reckoning)

Gilbert Yvel was one of the most exciting fighters on the planet for most of the last ten years. Unfortunately, his career, filled with amazing moments and explosive knockouts, will likely be reduced to caricature. Yvel will be

In Their Own Words: Gilbert Yvel on gouging Don Frye

"There was no way I was going to win that fight. He came out to the national anthem of America, the 'Terrorists Suck' T-shirt, and a flak vest. It was like I was the terrorist and he was the fucking army. I made some mistakes. I got all fucked up and mad because he didn't want to fight with me and only wanted to take me to the ground. It was stupid. I was just stupid.

"In Pride the people were just scared. No one wanted to stand up with me. They would just put me on the ground and didn't want to fight with me. I got frustrated with all those fighters in Pride who didn't want to stand up and trade with me. They just wanted to lie on the ground."

remembered as the world's dirtiest fighter, the key evidence being a legendary YouTube clip from a 2004 fight in Finland against Atte Backman.

A frustrated Yvel punched the referee in that fight. For good measure, he kicked him when he was down. Sure, there were extenuating circumstances. The referee was also the trainer of his opponent. And maybe he wasn't enforcing the rules the way Yvel would have liked. But assaulting the referee was inexcusable and, combined with a pattern of behavior, colored Yvel's reputation and helped deny him a license to fight in the state of Nevada.

Yvel's bad behavior is legendary. He's bitten an opponent (Karim Barkalaev); blatantly used illegal elbows (**Dan Henderson**); repeatedly gouged an opponent's eye (**Don Frye**); and, yes, punched out the referee. His opponents aren't the only ones who suffer; Yvel is also a victim of these transgressions. The culprit is not the affable Yvel who charms everyone he meets. It's the Mr. Hyde version, the one who can't control his temper.

It's this uncontrollable anger that's kept Yvel from meeting his true potential as a fighter. No game plan can stick with him. It's all thrown out the window when the bell rings. A switch flips then, and Yvel goes on the attack.

In the beginning, this style served Yvel well. He had great success using his superior standup against the grapplers in Japan's **Rings** promotion. If his rush to glory resulted in a takedown, the rules allowed him to grab the ropes to force a standup, in turn losing a point. With these rules in place, Yvel usually had five chances to finish the fight before he ran out of points. This was normally not a problem, and Yvel burst into international prominence by beating top Japanese stars like **Tsuyoshi Kohsaka** and **Kiyoshi Tamura**.

As Rings struggled financially, Yvel made a controversial jump to **Pride**. This infuriated Rings' president **Akira Maeda**, who had an agreement with Yvel's manager that he would stay in exchange for a big fight with Tamura. Instead, his manager had already committed to Pride, increasing his paycheck fourfold. It was good for the pocketbook, but a poor move for his fighting career. In Pride, fighters like **Vitor Belfort** could take Yvel down and there were no rope escapes to rescue him. He turned into an ordinary fighter, albeit one capable of astounding feats like his spectacular knockout of **Gary Goodridge**. Yvel remains a fringe contender in the heavyweight division, remains an explosive striker, but remains vulnerable when the fight hits the ground.



ZST: see **Deep/ZST**

Zuffa

By 2000, years of turmoil and dozens of battles with politicians and cable executives had worn **Bob Meyrowitz** down. After almost a decade of fighting the machine, he was ready to sell. The **UFC** had secured sanctioning from Larry Hazzard and the New Jersey Athletic Control Board. Profitability seemed possible and there were plenty of interested parties. When he heard the promotion might be for sale **Dana White**, the manager of top UFC fighters **Chuck Liddell** and **Tito Ortiz**, acted quickly. White got in touch with his old friend Lorenzo **Fertitta**, a former member of the Nevada State Athletic Commission — and a billionaire casino mogul to boot. When the UFC attempted to get MMA sanctioned in Nevada, Fertitta was unsure whether it was a good fit for his state. A year later, everything had changed. He had even begun training with jiu-jitsu wizard **John Lewis**. Lorenzo was now a fan — one with the connections and money to help the UFC grow. He and his brother Frank Fertitta III bought the company for \$2 million in January 2001. They formed Zuffa, Italian for “scrap,” to become the UFC’s parent company and put millions into developing the brand and the sport. Today, the consensus value of Zuffa at is over a billion dollars.

The Fertittas have steadfastly avoided taking Zuffa public and have turned down numerous offers to buy the company, including one reportedly of \$1.2 billion. In 2010 they sold a 10 percent share of Zuffa to Flash Entertainment, an entertainment company run by the government in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. With the sale, 40.5 percent of Zuffa is now held by Lorenzo, the company’s CEO and chairman; 40.5 percent by his older brother, Frank; and, 10 percent by Flash Entertainment. Dana White personally holds the remaining 9 percent.

Appendix I

Ultimate Fighting Championship Results

UFC 1

11/12/93

McNichols Sports Arena (Denver, Colorado)

Main Event: Royce Gracie defeated Gerard Gordeau (rear naked choke, won UFC 1 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Royce Gracie defeated Ken Shamrock (gi choke)
Gerard Gordeau defeated Kevin Rosier (TKO)
Ken Shamrock defeated Pat Smith (heel hook)
Royce Gracie defeated Art Jimmerson (submission to position)
Kevin Rosier defeated Zane Frazier (corner stoppage)
Gerard Gordeau defeated Teila Tuli (TKO)
Jason DeLucia defeated Trent Jenkins (rear naked choke)

UFC 2

3/11/94

Mammoth Gardens (Denver, Colorado)

Main Event: Royce Gracie defeated Patrick Smith (submission to strikes, won UFC 2 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Royce Gracie defeated Remco Pardoel (gi choke)
Patrick Smith defeated Johnny Rhodes (guillotine choke)
Royce Gracie defeated Jason DeLucia (arm bar)
Remco Pardoel defeated Orlando Weit (elbows)
Johnny Rhodes defeated Fred Ettish (side choke)
Patrick Smith defeated Scott Morris (KO)
Royce Gracie defeated Minoki Ichihara (gi choke)
Jason DeLucia defeated Scott Baker (submission to strikes)
Remco Pardoel defeated Alberto Cerra Leon (arm bar)
Orlando Weit defeated Robert Lucarelli (TKO)
Frank Hamaker defeated Thaddeus Luster (submission)

Johnny Rhodes defeated David Levicki (submission to strikes)

Patrick Smith defeated Ray Wizard (guillotine choke)

Scott Morris defeated Sean Daugherty (guillotine choke)

UFC 3

9/9/94

Grady Cole Center (Charlotte, North Carolina)

Main Event: Steve Jenum defeated Harold Howard (submission to strikes, won UFC 3 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Harold Howard defeated Royce Gracie (forfeit)
Ken Shamrock defeated Felix Lee Mitchell (rear naked choke)
Royce Gracie defeated Kimo Leopoldo (arm bar)
Harold Howard defeated Roland Payne (KO)
Ken Shamrock defeated Christophe Leninger (submission to strikes)
Keith Hackney defeated Emmanuel Yarborough (submission to strikes)

UFC 4

12/16/94

Expo Square Pavilion (Tulsa, Oklahoma)

Main Event: Royce Gracie defeated Dan Severn (triangle choke, won UFC 4 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Dan Severn defeated Marcus Bossett (rear naked choke)
Royce Gracie defeated Keith Hackney (arm bar)
Dan Severn defeated Anthony Macias (rear naked choke)
Steve Jenum defeated Melton Bowen (arm bar)
Keith Hackney defeated Joe Son (submission to strikes)

Royce Gracie defeated Ron van Clief (rear naked choke)
Guy Mezger defeated Jason Fairn (corner stoppage)
Marcus Bossett defeated Eldo Diax Xavier (KO)
Joe Charles defeated Kevin Rosier (arm bar)

UFC 5

4/7/95

Independence Arena (Charlotte, North Carolina)

Main Event: Dan Severn defeated Dave Beneteau (key lock, won UFC 5 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Royce Gracie vs. Ken Shamrock (draw)
Dan Severn defeated Oleg Taktarov (TKO)
Dave Beneteau defeated Todd Medina (TKO)
Dan Severn defeated Joe Charles (rear naked choke)
Oleg Taktarov defeated Ernie Verdicia (choke)
Todd Medina defeated Larry Cureton (choke)
Jon Hess defeated Andy Anderson (TKO)
Guy Mezger defeated John Dowdy (TKO)
Dave Beneteau defeated Asbel Cancio (TKO)

UFC 6

6/14/95

Casper Events Center (Casper, Wyoming)

Main Event: Oleg Taktarov defeated David Abbott (rear naked choke, won UFC 6 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Ken Shamrock defeated Dan Severn (guillotine choke, won UFC Superfight Championship)
Oleg Taktarov defeated Anthony Macias (guillotine choke)
David Abbott defeated Paul Varelans (TKO)
Oleg Taktarov defeated Dave Beneteau (guillotine choke)
Pat Smith defeated Rudyard Moncayo (rear naked choke)
Paul Varelans defeated Cal Worsham (TKO)
David Abbott defeat John Matua (KO)
Anthony Macias defeated He-Man Gipson (submission to strikes)
Joel Sutton defeated Jack McGlaughlin (submission to strikes)

UFC 7

9/8/95

Memorial Auditorium (Buffalo, New York)

Main Event: Marco Ruas defeated Paul Varelans (TKO, won UFC 7 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Ken Shamrock vs. Oleg Taktarov (draw)
Paul Varelans defeated Mark Hall (key lock)
Marco Ruas defeated Remco Pardoel (submission to position)
Marco Ruas defeated Larry Cureton (heel hook)
Remco Pardoel defeated Ryan Parker (choke)
Mark Hall defeated Harold Howard (submission to strikes)
Paul Varelans defeated Gerry Harris (submission to strikes)
Joel Sutton defeated Geza Kalman (TKO)
Scott Bessac defeated David Hood (guillotine choke)
Onassis Parungo defeated Francesco Maturi (submission to strikes)

The Ultimate Ultimate 1

12/16/95

Mammoth Gardens (Denver, Colorado)

Main Event: Dan Severn defeated Oleg Taktarov (decision, won Ultimate Ultimate Tournament)

Other Fights:

Oleg Taktarov defeated Marco Ruas (decision)
Dan Severn defeated David Abbott (decision)
Marco Ruas defeated Keith Hackney (rear naked choke)
Oleg Taktarov defeated Dave Beneteau (ankle lock)
David Abbott defeated Steve Jennum (neck crank)
Dan Severn defeated Paul Varelans (arm triangle)
Mark Hall defeated Trent Jenkins (arm bar)
Joe Charles defeated Scott Bessac (arm bar)

UFC 8

2/16/96

Ruben Rodriguez Coliseum (San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Main Event: Don Frye defeated Gary Goodridge (submission to strikes, won UFC 8 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Ken Shamrock defeated Kimo Leopoldo (knee bar)

Gary Goodridge defeated Jerry Bohlander (TKO)
Don Frye defeated Sam Adkins (doctor stoppage)
Gary Goodridge defeated Paul Herrera (KO)
Jerry Bohlander defeated Scott Ferrozzo
(guillotine choke)
Paul Varelans defeated Joe Moreira (decision)
Don Frye defeated Thomas Ramirez (KO)
Sam Adkins defeated Keith Mielke (submission to strikes)

UFC 9

5/17/96

Cobo Arena (Detroit, Michigan)

Main Event: Dan Severn defeated Ken Shamrock (decision, won UFC Superfight Championship)

Other Fights:

Don Frye defeated Amaury Bitetti (TKO)
Mark Hall defeated Koji Kitao (TKO)
Mark Schultz defeated Gary Goodridge (TKO)
Rafael Carino defeated Matt Andersen (submission to strikes)
Cal Worsham defeated Zane Frazier (submission to strikes)
Steve Nelmark defeated Tai Bowden (TKO)

UFC 10

6/12/96

Fairgrounds Arena (Birmingham, Alabama)

Main Event: Mark Coleman defeated Don Frye (TKO, won UFC 10 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Mark Coleman defeated Gary Goodridge (submission to exhaustion)
Don Frye defeated Brian Johnston (submission to strikes)
Gary Goodridge defeated John Campetella (KO)
Mark Coleman defeated Moti Horenstein (TKO)
Brian Johnston defeated Scott Fielder (TKO)
Don Frye defeated Mark Hall (submission to strikes)
Geza Kalman defeated Dieusel Berto (TKO)
Sam Adkins defeated Felix Lee Mitchell (decision)

UFC 11

9/20/96

Augusta Civic Center (Augusta, Georgia)

Main Event: Mark Coleman won UFC 11 Tournament by default

Other Fights:

Scott Ferrozzo defeated David Abbott (decision)
Mark Coleman defeated Brian Johnston (submission to strikes)
Jerry Bohlander defeated Fabio Gurgel (decision)
David Abbott defeated Sam Adkins (neck crank)
Brian Johnston defeated Reza Nasri (TKO)
Mark Coleman defeated Julian Sanchez (choke)
Roberto Tavern defeated Dave Berry (TKO)
Scott Ferrozzo defeated Sam Fulton (TKO)

The Ultimate Ultimate 2

12/7/96

Fair Park Arena (Birmingham, Alabama)

Main Event: Don Frye defeated David Abbott (rear naked choke, won Ultimate Ultimate 2 Tournament)

Other Fights:

Don Frye defeated Mark Hall (Achilles hold)
David Abbott defeated Steve Nelmark (KO)
Kimo Leopoldo defeated Paul Varelans (TKO)
David Abbott defeated Cal Worsham (submission to strikes)
Don Frye defeated Gary Goodridge (submission to exhaustion)
Ken Shamrock defeated Brian Johnston (choke)
Steve Nelmark defeated Marcus Bossett (choke)
Mark Hall defeated Felix Lee Mitchell (TKO)

UFC 12

2/7/97

Dothan Civic Center (Dothan, Alabama)

Main Event: Mark Coleman defeated Dan Severn (choke, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Vitor Belfort defeated Scott Ferrozzo (TKO, won UFC 12 Heavyweight Tournament)
Jerry Bohlander defeated Nick Sanzo (choke, won UFC 12 Lightweight Tournament)
Vitor Belfort defeated Tra Telligman (TKO)
Scott Ferrozzo defeated Jim Mullen (TKO)
Kazuo Takahashi defeated Wallid Ismail (decision)
Jerry Bohlander defeated Rainy Martinez (choke)

Justin Martin defeated Eric Martin (heel hook)

Nick Sanzo defeated Jackie Lee (TKO)

UFC 13

5/30/97

Augusta Civic Center (Augusta, Georgia)

Main Event: Vitor Belfort defeated David Abbott (TKO)

Other Fights:

Randy Couture defeated Steven Graham (TKO, won UFC 13 Heavyweight Tournament)

Guy Mezger defeated Tito Ortiz (guillotine choke, won UFC 13 Lightweight Tournament)

Randy Couture defeated Tony Halme (rear naked choke)

Steven Graham defeated Dmitri Stepanov (Americana)

Enson Inoue defeated Royce Alger (arm bar)

Guy Mezger defeated Christophe Leninger (decision)

Jack Nilson defeated Saeed Hosseini (TKO)

Tito Ortiz defeated Wes Albritton (TKO)

UFC 14

7/27/97

Boutwell Auditorium (Birmingham, Alabama)

Main Event: Maurice Smith defeated Mark Coleman (decision, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Mark Kerr defeated Dan Bobish (submission to chin in the eye, won UFC 14 Heavyweight Tournament)

Kevin Jackson defeated Tony Fryklund (rear naked choke, won UFC 14 Middleweight Tournament)

Dan Bobish defeated Brian Johnston (TKO)

Mark Kerr defeated Moti Horenstein (TKO)

Kevin Jackson defeated Todd Butler (TKO)

Joe Moreira defeated Yuri Vaulin (decision)

Alex Hunter defeated Sam Fulton (TKO)

Tony Fryklund defeated Donnie Chappell (choke)

UFC 15

10/17/97

Casino Magic (Bay St. Louis, Mississippi)

Main Event: Maurice Smith defeated David Abbott (submission to strikes)

Other Fights:

Mark Kerr defeated Dwayne Carson (rear naked choke, won UFC 15 Heavyweight Tournament)

Randy Couture defeated Vitor Belfort (TKO)

Dave Beneteau defeated Carlos Barreto (decision)

Mark Kerr defeated Greg Stott (KO)

Dwayne Carson defeated Houston Dorr (TKO)

Alex Hunter defeated Harry Moskowitz (decision)

UFC 15.5: Ultimate Japan

12/21/97

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Maurice Smith (decision, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Marcus Silveira (arm bar, won Ultimate Japan Heavyweight Tournament)

Vitor Belfort defeated Joe Charles (arm bar)

Frank Shamrock defeated Kevin Jackson (arm bar, won UFC Middleweight Championship)

Kazushi Sakuraba vs. Marcus Silveira (no contest)

David Abbott defeated Yoji Anjo (decision)

Tra Telligman defeated Brad Kohler (arm bar)

UFC 16

3/13/98

Pontchartrain Center (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Main Event: Frank Shamrock defeated Igor Zinoviev (KO)

Other Fights:

Tsuyoshi Kosaka defeated Kimo Leopoldo (decision)

Pat Miletich defeated Chris Brennan (choke, won UFC 16 Lightweight Championship)

Jerry Bohlander defeated Kevin Jackson (arm bar)

Pat Miletich defeated Townsend Saunders (arm bar)

Mikey Burnett defeated Eugenio Tadeu (TKO)

Chris Brennan defeated Courtney Turner (arm bar)

LaVerne Clark defeated Josh Stuart (TKO)

UFC 17

5/15/98

Mobile Civic Center (Mobile, Alabama)

Main Event: Frank Shamrock defeated Jeremy Horn (knee bar)

Other Fights:

Pete William defeated Mark Coleman (KO)
Dan Henderson defeated Carlos Newton (decision, won UFC 17 Middleweight Tournament)
David Abbott defeated Hugo Duarte (TKO)
Mike Van Arsdale defeated Joe Pardo (Kimura)
Carlos Newton defeated Bob Gilstrap (triangle choke)
Dan Henderson defeated Allan Goes (decision)
Andre Roberts defeated Harry Moskowitz (decision)
Chuck Liddell defeated Noe Hernandez (decision)

UFC 17.5: Ultimate Brazil

10/16/98

Ginasio da Portuguesa (Sao Paulo, Brazil)

Main Event: Frank Shamrock defeated John Lober (submission to strikes)

Other Fights:

Vitor Belfort defeated Wanderlei Silva (TKO)
Pedro Rizzo defeated David Abbott (KO)
Pat Miletich defeated Mikey Burnett (decision)
Tsuyoshi Kohsaka defeated Pete Williams (decision)
Ebenezer Fontes Braga defeated Jeremey Horn (guillotine choke)
Cesar Marsucci defeated Paulo Santos (TKO)
Tulio Palhares defeated Adriano Santos (TKO)

UFC 18

1/8/99

Pontchartrain Center (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Main Event: Pat Miletich defeated Jorge Patino (decision)

Other Fights:

Pedro Rizzo defeated Mark Coleman (decision)
Bas Rutten defeated Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (TKO)
Tito Ortiz defeated Jerry Bohlander (doctor stoppage)
Mikey Burnett defeated Townsend Saunders (decision)
Evan Tanner defeated Darrel Gholar (rear naked choke)

Laverne Clark defeated Frank Caracci (submission to strikes)

UFC 19

3/5/99

Casino Magic (Bay St. Louis, Mississippi)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Vitor Belfort (TKO)

Other Fights:

Gary Goodridge defeated Andre Roberts (submission to strikes)
Jeremy Horn defeated Chuck Liddell (arm triangle)
Kevin Randleman defeated Maurice Smith (decision)
Evan Tanner defeated Valeri Ignatov (TKO)
Pete Williams defeated Jason Godsey (submission to knee bar)

UFC 20

5/7/99

Boutwell Auditorium (Birmingham, Alabama)

Main Event: Bas Rutten defeated Kevin Randleman (decision, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Pedro Rizzo defeated Tra Telligman (KO)
Pete Williams defeated Travis Fulton (arm bar)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Tony Petarra (KO)
Marcelo Mello defeated David Roberts (TKO)
Laverne Clark defeated Fabiano Iha (doctor stoppage)
Ron Waterman defeated Chris Condo (submission to strikes)

UFC 21

7/16/99

Five Seasons Events Center (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)

Main Event: Maurice Smith defeated Marco Ruas (corner stoppage)

Other Fights:

Pat Miletich defeated Andre Pederneiras (doctor stoppage)
Jeremy Horn defeated Daiju Takase (TKO)
Paul Jones defeated Flavio Luiz Moura (rear naked choke)

Tsuyoshi Kohsaka defeated Tim Lajcik (doctor stoppage)

Eugene Jackson defeated Royce Alger (KO)

Andre Roberts defeated Ron Waterman (KO)

Travis Fulton defeated David Dodd (decision)

UFC 22

9/24/99

Lake Charles Civic Center (Lake Charles, Louisiana)

Main Event: Frank Shamrock defeated Tito Ortiz (submission to strikes)

Other Fights:

Tim Lajcik vs. Ron Waterman (draw)

Jeremy Horn defeated Jason Godsey (arm bar)

Brad Kohler defeated Steve Judson (KO)

Chuck Liddell defeated Paul Jones (TKO)

Matt Hughes defeated Valeri Ignatov (decision)

John Lewis defeated Lowell Anderson (TKO)

Jens Pulver vs. Alfonso Alcaarez (draw)

UFC 23: Ultimate Japan 2

11/19/99

Tokyo Bay NK Hall (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Kevin Randleman defeated Pete Williams (decision, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Pedro Rizzo defeated Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (TKO)

Kenichi Yamamoto defeated Katsuhisa Fujii (knee bar, won Ultimate Japan 2 Tournament)

Joe Slick defeated Jason DeLucia (TKO)

Eugene Jackson defeated Keiichiro Yamamiya (KO)

Kenichi Yamamoto defeated Daiju Takase (decision)

Katsuhisa Fujii defeated Masutatsu Yano (TKO)

UFC 24

3/10/00

Lake Charles Civic Center (Lake Charles, Louisiana)

Main Event: Tedd Williams defeated Steve Judson (TKO)

Other Fights:

Lance Gibson defeated Jermaine Andre (KO)

Dave Menne defeated Fabiano Iha (decision)

Bob Cook defeated Tiki Ghosn (rear naked choke)

Jens Pulver defeated David Velasquez (TKO)

Shonie Carter defeated Brad Gumm (decision)

Scott Adams defeated Ian Freeman (heel hook)

UFC 25: Ultimate Japan 3

4/14/00

Yoyogi National Gymnasium (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Wanderlei Silva (decision, won UFC Middleweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Murilo Bustamante defeated Yoji Anjo (arm triangle)

Sanae Kikuta defeated Eugene Jackson (arm bar)

Ron Waterman defeated Satoshi Honma (decision)

Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Joe Slick (TKO)

LaVerne Clark defeated Koji Oishi (decision)

UFC 26

6/9/00

Five Seasons Events Center (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)

Main Event: Kevin Randleman defeated Pedro Rizzo (decision)

Other Fights:

Tyrone Roberts defeated David Dodd (decision)

Pat Miletich defeated John Alessio (arm bar)

Amaury Bitetti defeated Alex Andrade (DQ)

Matt Hughes defeated Marcelo Aguiar (doctor stoppage)

Jens Pulver defeated Joao Roque (decision)

Ian Freeman defeated Nate Schroeder (submission to strikes)

Shonie Carter defeated Adrian Serrano (decision)

UFC 27

9/22/00

Lake Front Arena (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Main Event: Pedro Rizzo defeated Dan Severn (submission to strikes)

Other Fights:

Maurice Smith defeated Bobby Hoffman (decision)

Jeremy Horn defeated Eugene Jackson (arm bar)

Fabiano Iha defeated LaVerne Clark (arm bar)

Yuki Kondo defeated Alexandre Dantas (TKO)

Ian Freeman defeated Tedd Williams (decision)

Brad Gumm vs. C.J. Fernandes (draw)

Jeff Monson defeated Tim Lajcik (decision)

UFC 28

11/17/00

Trump Taj Mahal (Atlantic City, New Jersey)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Kevin Randleman (TKO, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Renato Sobral defeated Maurice Smith (decision)
Josh Barnett defeated Gan McGee (TKO)
Andrei Arlovski defeated Aaron Brink (arm bar)
John Lewis defeated Jens Pulver (KO)
Mark Hughes defeated Alex Stiebling (decision)
Ben Earwood defeated Chris Lytle (decision)

UFC 29

12/16/00

Differ Ariake (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Yuki Kondo (neck crank)

Other Fights:

Pat Miletich defeated Kenichi Yamamoto (guillotine choke)
Matt Lindland defeated Yoji Anjo (TKO)
Fabiano Iha defeated Daiju Takase (TKO)
Even Tanner defeated Lance Gibson (TKO)
Dennis Hallman defeated Matt Hughes (arm bar)
Chuck Liddell defeated Jeff Monson (decision)

UFC 30

2/23/01

Trump Taj Mahal (Atlantic City, New Jersey)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Evan Tanner (KO)

Other Fights:

Jens Pulver defeated Caol Uno (decision, won UFC Bantamweight Championship)
Phil Baroni defeated Curtis Stout (decision)
Sean Sherk defeated Tiki Ghosn (submission)
Fabiano Iha defeated Phil Johns (arm bar)
Pedro Rizzo defeated Josh Barnett (KO)
Elvis Sinosic defeated Jeremy Horn (arm bar)
Bobby Hoffman defeated Mark Robinson (KO)

UFC 31

5/4/01

Trump Taj Mahal (Atlantic City, New Jersey)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Pedro Rizzo (decision)

Other Fights:

Carlos Newton defeated Pat Miletich (side choke, won UFC Welterweight Championship)
Chuck Liddell defeated Kevin Randleman (KO)
Shonie Carter defeated Matt Serra (KO)
Semmy Schilt defeated Pete Williams (TKO)
Matt Lindland defeated Ricardo Almeida (DQ)
B.J. Penn defeated Joey Gilbert (TKO)
Tony DeSouza defeated Steve Berger (decision)

UFC 32

6/29/01

Continental Airlines Arena (East Rutherford, New Jersey)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Elvis Sinosic (TKO)

Other Fights:

B.J. Penn defeated Din Thomas (TKO)
Josh Barnett defeated Semmy Schilt (arm bar)
Pat Miletich defeated Shonie Carter (KO)
Caol Uno defeated Fabiano Iha (TKO)
Vladimir Matyushenko defeated Yuki Kondo (decision)
Ricco Rodriguez defeated Andrei Arlovski (TKO)
Tony DeSouza defeated Paul Rodriguez (guillotine choke)

UFC 33

9/22/01

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Vladimir Matyushenko (decision)

Other Fights:

Jens Pulver defeated Dennis Hallman (decision)
Chuck Liddell defeated Murilo Bustamante (decision)
Matt Serra defeated Yves Edwards (decision)
Dave Menne defeated Gil Castillo (decision)
Jutaro Nakao defeated Tony DeSouza (KO)
Ricardo Almeida defeated Eugene Jackson (triangle choke)
Din Thomas defeated Fabiano Iha (decision)

UFC 34

11/2/01

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Pedro Rizzo (TKO)

Other Fights:

Ricco Rodriguez defeated Pete Williams (TKO)

Matt Hughes defeated Carlos Newton (KO, won UFC Welterweight Championship)

B.J. Penn defeated Caol Uno (KO)

Josh Barnett defeated Bobby Hoffman (submission to strikes)

Evan Tanner defeated Homer Moore (arm bar)

Matt Lindland defeated Phil Baroni (decision)

Frank Mir defeated Roberto Traven (arm bar)

UFC 35

1/11/02

Mohegan Sun Arena (Uncasville, Connecticut)

Main Event: Jens Pulver defeated B.J. Penn (decision)

Other Fights:

Ricco Rodriguez defeated Jeff Monson (TKO)

Murilo Bustamante defeated Dave Menne (KO, won UFC Middleweight Championship)

Chuck Liddell defeated Amar Suloev (decision)

Andrei Semenov defeated Ricardo Almeida (KO)

Kevin Randleman defeated Renato Sobral (decision)

Gil Castillo defeated Chris Brennan (decision)

Eugene Jackson defeated Keith Rockel (guillotine choke)

UFC 36

3/22/02

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Josh Barnett defeated Randy Couture (TKO, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Pedro Rizzo defeated Andrei Arlovski (KO)

Matt Hughes defeated Hayato Sakurai (TKO)

Matt Lindland defeated Pat Miletich (TKO)

Evan Tanner defeated Elvis Sinosic (doctor stoppage)

Frank Mir defeated Pete Williams (shoulder lock)

Matt Serra defeated Kelly Dullanty (triangle choke)

Sean Sherk defeated Jutaro Nakao (decision)

UFC 37

5/10/02

CenturyTel Center (Bossier City, Louisiana)

Main Event: Murilo Bustamante defeated Matt Lindland (guillotine choke)

Other Fights:

Ricco Rodriguez defeated Tsuyoshi Kosaka (TKO)

B.J. Penn defeated Paul Creighton (TKO)

Phil Baroni defeated Amar Suloev (KO)

Caol Uno defeated Yves Edwards (decision)

Ivan Salaverry defeated Andrei Semenov (TKO)

Benji Radach defeated Steve Barger (TKO)

Robbie Lawler defeated Aaron Riley (decision)

UFC 37.5

6/22/02

Bellagio Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Chuck Liddell defeated Vitor Belfort (decision)

Other Fights:

Benji Radach defeated Nick Serra (decision)

Pete Spratt defeated Zach Light (arm bar)

Robbie Lawler defeated Steve Berger (TKO)

Tony Fryklund defeated Rodrigo Ruas (TKO)

Yves Edwards defeated Joao Marcos Pierini (TKO)

UFC 38

7/12/02

Royal Albert Hall (London, England)

Main Event: Matt Hughes defeated Carlos Newton (TKO)

Other Fights:

Ian Freeman defeated Frank Mir (TKO)

Mark Weir defeated Eugene Jackson (KO)

Elvis Sinosic defeated Renato Sobral (decision)

Genki Sudo defeated Leigh Remedios (rear naked choke)

Phillip Miller defeated James Zikic (decision)

Evan Tanner defeated Chris Haseman (decision)

UFC 39

9/27/02

Mohegan Sun Arena (Uncasville, Connecticut)

Main Event: Ricco Rodriguez defeated Randy Couture (submission to strikes, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Tim Sylvia defeated Wesley Correia (corner stoppage)
B.J. Penn defeated Matt Serra (decision)
Caol Uno defeated Din Thomas (decision)
Gan McGee defeated Pedro Rizzo (corner stoppage)
Phil Baroni defeated Dave Menne (KO)
Matt Lindland defeated Ivan Salaverry (decision)
Sean Sherk defeated Benji Radach (TKO)

UFC 40

11/22/02

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Ken Shamrock (corner stoppage)

Other Fights:

Chuck Liddell defeated Renato Sobral (TKO)
Matt Hughes defeated Gil Castillo (TKO)
Carlos Newton defeated Pete Spratt (Kimura)
Robbie Lawler defeated Tiki Ghosn (TKO)
Andrei Arlovski defeated Ian Freeman (TKO)
Vladimir Matyushenko defeated Travis Wiuff (submission to strikes)
Phillip Miller defeated Mark Weir (rear naked choke)

UFC 41

2/28/03

Boardwalk Hall (Atlantic City, New Jersey)

Main Event: Tim Sylvia defeated Ricco Rodriguez (KO, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Frank Mir defeated David Abbott (toe hold)
B.J. Penn vs. Caol Uno (draw)
Matt Lindland defeated Phil Baroni (decision)
Vladimir Matyushenko defeated Pedro Rizzo (decision)
Din Thomas defeated Matt Serra (decision)
Gan McGee defeated Alexandre Dantas (TKO)
Yves Edwards defeated Rich Clementi (rear naked choke)

UFC 42

4/25/03

American Airlines Arena (Miami, Florida)

Main Event: Matt Hughes defeated Sean Sherk (decision)

Other Fights:

Pete Spratt defeated Robbie Lawler (submission)
Wesley Correia defeated Sean Alvarez (TKO)
Rich Franklin defeated Evan Tanner (TKO)
Duane Ludwig defeated Genki Sudo (decision)
Dave Strasser defeated Romie Aram (decision)
Hermes Franca defeated Richard Crunkilton (decision)
David Loiseau defeated Mark Weir (KO)

UFC 43

6/6/03

Thomas and Mack Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Chuck Liddell (TKO, won UFC Interim Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Kimo Leopoldo defeated David Abbott (arm triangle)
Vitor Belfort defeated Marvin Eastman (TKO)
Ian Freeman vs. Vernon White (draw)
Frank Mir defeated Wes Sims (DQ)
Yves Edwards defeated Eddie Ruiz (decision)
Falaniko Vitale defeated Matt Lindland (TKO)
Pedro Rizzo defeated Tra Telligman (doctor stoppage)

UFC 44

9/26/03

Red Rock Resort Spa and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Tito Ortiz (decision, unifies UFC Interim Light Heavyweight Championship and UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Andrei Arlovski defeated Vladimir Matyushenko (KO)
Tim Sylvia defeated Gan McGee (KO)
Jorge Rivera defeated David Loiseau (decision)
Rich Franklin defeated Edwin DeWees (TKO)

Karo Parisyan defeated Dave Strasser (Kimura)
Josh Thomson defeated Gerald Streibendt (KO)
Nick Diaz defeated Jeremy Jackson (arm bar)
Hermes Franca defeated Caol Uno (KO)

UFC 45

11/21/03

Mohegan Sun Arena (Uncasville, Connecticut)

Main Event: Matt Hughes defeated Frank Trigg (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Matt Lindland defeated Falinko Vitale (submission to strikes)
Wesley Correia defeated David Abbott (doctor stoppage)
Robbie Lawler defeated Chris Lytle (decision)
Evan Tanner defeated Phil Baroni (TKO)
Pedro Rizzo defeated Ricco Rodriguez (decision)
Keith Rockel defeated Chris Liguori (guillotine choke)
Yves Edwards defeated Nick Agalliar (TKO)

UFC 46

1/31/04

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Vitor Belfor defeated Randy Couture (doctor stoppage, won UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Renato Verissimo defeated Carlos Newton (decision)
B.J. Penn defeated Matt Hughes (rear naked choke, won UFC Welterweight Championship)
Frank Mir defeated Wes Sims (KO)
Lee Murray defeated Jorge Rivera (triangle arm bar)
Georges St. Pierre defeated Karo Parisyan (decision)
Josh Thomson defeated Hermes Franca (decision)
Matt Serra defeated Jeff Curran (decision)

UFC 47

4/2/04

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Chuck Liddell defeated Tito Ortiz (KO)

Other Fights:

Chris Lytle defeated Tiki Ghosn (side choke)
Yves Edwards defeated Hermes Franca (decision)
Andrei Arlovski defeated Wesley Correia (TKO)
Nick Diaz defeated Robbie Lawler (KO)
Mike Kyle defeated Wes Sims (KO)
Jonathan Wiezorek defeated Wade Shipp (TKO)
Genki Sudo defeated Mike Brown (arm bar)

UFC 48

6/19/04

Mandalay Bay Arena (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Ken Shamrock defeated Kimo Leopoldo (TKO)

Other Fights:

Frank Trigg defeated Dennis Hallman (TKO)
Frank Mir defeated Tim Sylvia (arm bar, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)
Matt Hughes defeated Renato Verissimo (decision)
Evan Tanner defeated Phil Baroni (decision)
Matt Serra defeated Ivan Menjivar (decision)
Georges St. Pierre defeated Jay Hieron (TKO)
Trevor Prangley defeated Curtis Stout (neck crank)

UFC 49

8/21/04

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Vitor Belfort (doctor stoppage, won UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Joe Riggs defeated Joe Doerkson (submission to strikes)
Chuck Liddell defeated Vernon White (KO)
David Terrell defeated Matt Lindland (KO)
Justin Eilers defeated Mike Kyle (KO)
Chris Lytle defeated Ronald Jhun (guillotine choke)
Karo Parisyan defeated Nick Diaz (decision)
Yves Edwards defeated Josh Thomson (KO)

UFC 50

10/22/04

Trump Plaza (Atlantic City, New Jersey)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Patrick Côté (decision)

Other Fights:

Rich Franklin defeated Jorge Rivera (arm bar)
Matt Hughes defeated Georges St. Pierre (arm bar, won UFC Welterweight Championship)
Frank Trigg defeated Renato Verissimo (TKO)
Evan Tanner defeated Robbie Lawler (triangle choke)
Ivan Salaverry defeated Tony Fryklund (body triangle)
Travis Lutter defeated Marvin Eastman (KO)

UFC 51

2/5/05

Mandalay Bay Arena (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Vitor Belfort (decision)

Other Fights:

Pete Sell defeated Phil Baroni (guillotine)
Andrei Arlovski defeated Tim Sylvia (Achilles lock, won UFC Interim Heavyweight Championship)
Evan Tanner defeated David Terrell (TKO, won UFC Middleweight Championship)
Paul Buentello defeated Justin Eilers (KO)
Mike Kyle defeated James Irvin (KO)
David Loiseau defeated Gideon Ray (TKO)
Karo Parisyan defeated Chris Lytle (decision)
Nick Diaz defeated Drew Fickett (TKO)

The Ultimate Fighter 1 Finale

4/9/05

Cox Pavillion (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Rich Franklin defeated Ken Shamrock (TKO)

Other Fights:

Forrest Griffin defeated Stephan Bonnar (decision, won Light Heavyweight *TUF* Tournament)
Diego Sanchez defeated Kenny Florian (TKO, won Middleweight *TUF* Tournament)
Sam Hoger defeated Bobby Southworth (decision)
Chris Leben defeated Jason Thacker (TKO)
Josh Koscheck defeated Chris Sanford (KO)
Nate Quarry defeated Lodune Sincaid (TKO)
Mike Swick defeated Alex Schoenauer (KO)
Alex Karalexis defeated Josh Rafferty (TKO)

UFC 52

4/16/05

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Chuck Liddell defeated Randy Couture (KO, won UFC Light Heavyweight Champion)

Other Fights:

Renato Sobral defeated Travis Wiuff (arm bar)
Matt Hughes defeated Frank Trigg (rear naked choke)
Matt Lindland defeated Travis Lutter (guillotine choke)
Georges St. Pierre defeated Jason Miller (decision)
Ivan Salaverry defeated Joe Riggs (triangle choke)
Joe Doerksen defeated Patrick Côté (rear naked choke)
Mike Van Arsdale defeated John Marsh (decision)

UFC 53

6/4/05

Boardwalk Hall (Atlantic City, New Jersey)

Main Event: Andrei Arlovski defeated Justin Eilers (TKO)

Other Fights:

Karo Parisyan defeated Matt Serra (decision)
Rich Franklin defeated Evan Tanner (doctor stoppage, won UFC Middleweight Championship)
Forrest Griffin defeated Bill Mahood (rear naked choke)
Paul Buentello defeated Kevin Jordan (guillotine choke)
Nathan Quarry defeated Shonie Carter (TKO)
David Loiseau defeated Charles McCarthy (TKO)
Nick Diaz defeated Koji Oishi (TKO)

Ultimate Fight Night

8/6/05

Cox Pavillion (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event:

Nate Marquardt defeated Ivan Salaverry (decision)
Chris Leben defeated Patrick Côté (decision)
Stephan Bonar defeated Sam Hoger (decision)
Nate Quarry defeated Pete Sell (KO)
Josh Koscheck defeated Pete Spratt (rear naked choke)

Mike Swick defeated Gideon Ray (KO)
Kenny Florian defeated Alex Karalexis (doctor
stoppage)
Drew Fickett defeated Josh Neer (rear naked
choke)

UFC 54

8/20/05

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Chuck Liddell defeated Jeremy Horn
(doctor stoppage)

Other Fights:

Tim Sylvia defeated Tra Telligman (KO)
Randy Couture defeated Mike Van Arsdale
(anaconda choke)
Diego Sanchez defeated Brian Gassaway
(submission to strikes)
Georges St. Pierre defeated Frank Trigg (rear
naked choke)
Matt Lindland defeated Joe Doerksen (decision)
Trevor Prangley defeated Travis Lutter (decision)
James Irvin defeated Terry Martin (KO)

Ultimate Fight Night 2

10/3/05

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: David Loiseau defeated Evan Tanner (TKO)

Other Fights:

Chris Leben defeated Edwin DeWees (arm bar)
Brandon Vera defeated Fabiano Scherner (TKO)
Drew Fickett defeated Josh Koscheck (rear naked
choke)
Spencer Fisher defeated Thiago Alves (triangle
choke)
Jon Fitch defeated Brock Larson (decision)
Jonathan Goulet defeated Jay Hieron (TKO)

UFC 55

10/7/05

Mohegan Sun Arena (Uncasville, Connecticut)

Main Event: Andrei Arlovski defeated Paul Buentello
(KO, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Forrest Griffin defeated Elvis Sinosic (TKO)
Branden Lee Hinkle defeated Sean Gannon (TKO)

Renato Sobral defeated Chael Sonnen (triangle
choke)
Joe Riggs defeated Chris Lytle (doctor stoppage)
Jorge Rivera defeated Dennis Hallman (decision)
Marcio Cruz defeated Keigo Kuniyama (rear naked
choke)
Alessio Sakara vs. Ron Faircloth (no contest)

The Ultimate Fighter 2 Finale

11/5/05

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Diego Sanchez defeated Nick Diaz
(decision)

Other Fights:

Rashad Evans defeated Brad Imes (decision, won
Heavyweight *TUF* Tournament)
Joe Stevenson defeated Luke Cummo (decision,
won Welterweight *TUF* Tournament)
Kenny Florian defeated Kit Cope (rear naked
choke)
Josh Burkman defeated Sammy Morgan (KO)
Melvin Guillard defeated Marcus Davis (TKO)
Keith Jardine defeated Kerry Schall (TKO)

UFC 56

11/19/05

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Rich Franklin defeated Nathan Quarry
(KO)

Other Fights:

Gabriel Gonzaga defeated Kevin Jordan (KO)
Matt Hughes defeated Joe Riggs (Kimura)
Georges St. Pierre defeated Sean Sherk (TKO)
Jeremy Horn defeated Trevor Prangley (decision)
Sam Hoger defeated Jeff Newton (rear naked
choke)
Thiago Alves defeated Ansar Chalangov (TKO)
Nick Thompson defeated Keith Wisniewski
(decision)

Ultimate Fight Night 3

11/16/06

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Tim Sylvia defeated Assuerio Silva
(decision)

Other Fights:

Stephan Bonnar defeated James Irvin (Kimura)
Chris Leben defeated Jorge Rivera (TKO)
Josh Burkman defeated Drew Fickett (guillotine choke)
Josh Neer defeated Melvin Guillard (triangle choke)
Duane Ludwig defeated Jonathan Goulet (TKO)
Spencer Fisher defeated Aaron Riley (doctor stoppage)
Jason Von Flue defeated Alex Karalexis (arm triangle)

UFC 57

2/4/06

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Chuck Liddell defeated Randy Couture (KO)

Other Fights:

Marcio Cruz defeated Frank Mir (TKO)
Brandon Vera defeated Justin Eilers (KO)
Renato Sobral defeated Mike Van Arsdale (rear naked choke)
Joe Riggs defeated Nick Diaz (decision)
Alessio Sakara defeated Elvis Sinosic (decision)
Paul Buentello defeated Gilbert Aldana (TKO)
Jeff Monson defeated Branden Lee Hinkle (north-south choke)
Keith Jardine defeated Mike Whitehead (decision)

UFC 58

3/4/06

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Rich Franklin defeated David Loiseau (decision)

Other Fights:

Georges St. Pierre defeated B.J. Penn (decision)
Mike Swick defeated Steve Vigneault (guillotine choke)
Nathan Marquardt defeated Joe Doerksen (decision)
Mark Hominick defeated Yves Edwards (triangle arm bar)
Sam Stout defeated Spencer Fisher (decision)
Jason Lambert defeated Rob MacDonald (Kimura)

Tom Murphy defeated Icho Larenas (TKO)

Ultimate Fight Night 4

4/6/06

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Stephan Bonnar defeated Keith Jardine (decision)

Other Fights:

Rashad Evans defeated Sam Hoger (decision)
Josh Neer defeated Joe Stevenson (decision)
Chris Leben defeated Luigi Fioravanti (decision)
Luke Cummo defeated Jason Von Flue (decision)
Jon Fitch defeated Josh Burkman (rear naked choke)
Dan Christison defeated Brad Imes (arm bar)
Josh Koscheck defeated Ansar Chalangov (rear naked choke)
Chael Sonnen defeated Trevor Prangley (decision)

UFC 59

4/15/06

Arrowhead Pond (Anaheim, California)

Main Event: Tim Sylvia defeated Andrei Arlovski (TKO, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Tito Ortiz defeated Forrest Griffin (decision)
Sean Sherk defeated Nick Diaz (decision)
Evan Tanner defeated Justin Levens (triangle choke)
Jeff Monson defeated Marcio Cruz (decision)
Karo Parisyan defeated Nick Thompson (submission to strikes)
David Terrell defeated Scott Smith (rear naked choke)
Jason Lambert defeated Terry Martin (TKO)
Thiago Alves defeated Derrick Noble (TKO)

UFC 60

5/27/06

Staples Center (Los Angeles, California)

Main Event: Matt Hughes defeated Royce Gracie (TKO)

Other Fights:

Diego Sanchez defeated John Alessio (decision)
Brandon Vera defeated Assuerio Silva (guillotine choke)

Mike Swick defeated Joe Riggs (guillotine choke)
Dean Lister defeated Alessio Sakara (triangle choke)
Jeremy Horn defeated Chael Sonnen (arm bar)
Spencer Fisher defeated Matt Wiman (KO)
Gabriel Gonzaga defeated Fabiano Scherner (TKO)
Melvin Guillard defeated Rick Davis (KO)

The Ultimate Fighter 3 Finale

6/24/06

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Kenny Florian defeated Sam Stout (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Michael Bisping defeated Josh Haynes (TKO, won TUF Light Heavyweight Tournament)
Kendall Grove defeated Ed Herman (decision, won TUF Middleweight Tournament)
Keith Jardine defeated Wilson Gouveia (decision)
Rory Singer defeated Ross Pointon (triangle choke)
Kalib Starnes defeated Danny Abbadi (rear naked choke)
Luigi Fioravanti defeated Solomon Hutcherson (KO)
Matt Hamill defeated Jesse Forbes (TKO)
Mike Nickels defeated Wes Combs (rear naked choke)

Ultimate Fight Night 5

6/28/06

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Chris Leben (KO)

Other Fights:

Jonathan Goulet defeated Luke Cummo (decision)
Rashad Evans defeated Stephan Bonnar (decision)
Mark Hominick defeated Jorge Gurgel (decision)
Josh Koscheck defeated Dave Menne (decision)
Jason Lambert defeated Branden Lee Hinkle (TKO)
Jon Fitch defeated Thiago Alves (TKO)
Rob MacDonald defeated Kristian Rothaermel (arm bar)
Jorge Santiago defeated Justin Levens (KO)

UFC 61

7/8/06

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Tim Sylvia defeated Andrei Arlovski (decision)

Other Fights:

Tito Ortiz defeated Ken Shamrock (TKO)
Josh Burkman defeated Josh Neer (decision)
Frank Mir defeated Dan Christison (decision)
Joe Stevenson defeated Yves Edwards (TKO)
Hermes Franca defeated Joe Jordan (triangle choke)
Jeff Monson defeated Anthony Perosh (TKO)
Cheick Kongo defeated Gilbert Aldana (TKO)
Drew Fickett defeated Kurt Pellegrino (rear naked choke)

Ultimate Fight Night 6

8/17/06

Red Rock Resort Spa and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Diego Sanchez defeated Karo Parisyan (decision)

Other Fights:

Chris Leben defeated Jorge Santiago (KO)
Dean Lister defeated Yuki Sasaki (decision)
Josh Koscheck defeated Jonathan Goulet (submission to strikes)
Martin Kampmann defeated Crafton Wallace (rear naked choke)
Joe Riggs defeated Jason Von Flue (triangle choke)
Jake O'Brien defeated Kristof Midoux (TKO)
Forrest Petz defeated Sammy Morgan (decision)
Anthony Torres defeated Pay Healy (rear naked choke)

UFC 62

8/26/06

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Chuck Liddell defeated Renato Sobral (TKO)

Other Fights:

Forrest Griffin defeated Stephan Bonnar (decision)
Hermes Franca defeated Jamie Varner (arm bar)
Nick Diaz defeated Josh Neer (Kimura)

Cheick Kongo defeated Christian Wellisch (KO)
Eric Schafer defeated Rob MacDonald (arm triangle)
Wilson Gouveia defeated Wes Combs (rear naked choke)
David Heath defeated Cory Walmsley (rear naked choke)
Yushi Okami defeated Alan Belcher (decision)

UFC 63

9/23/06

Arrowhead Pond (Anaheim, California)

Main Event: Matt Hughes defeated B.J. Penn (TKO)

Other Fights:

Mick Swick defeated David Loiseau (decision)
Rashad Evans defeated Jason Lambert (KO)
Joe Lauzon defeated Jens Pulver (KO)
Melvin Guillard defeated Gabe Ruediger (TKO)
Roger Huerta defeated Jason Dent (decision)
Eddie Sanchez defeated Mario Neto (KO)
Jorge Gurgel defeated Danny Abbadi (decision)
Tyson Griffin defeated David Lee (rear naked choke)

Ortiz vs. Shamrock 3

10/10/06

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Hollywood, Florida)

Main Event: Tito Ortiz defeated Ken Shamrock (KO)

Other Fights:

Kendall Grove defeated Chris Price (submission to strikes)
Jason MacDonald defeated Ed Herman (triangle choke)
Matt Hamill defeated Seth Petruzelli (decision)
Nate Marquardt defeated Crafton Wallace (rear naked choke)
Tony DeSouza defeated Dustin Hazelett (Kimura)
Rory Singer defeated Josh Haynes (decision)
Thiago Alves defeated John Alessio (decision)
Marcus Davis defeated Forrest Petz (guillotine choke)

UFC 64

10/14/06

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Rich Franklin (TKO, won UFC Middleweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Sean Sherk defeated Kenny Florian (decision, won UFC Lightweight Championship)
Carmelo Marrero defeated Cheick Kongo (decision)
Jon Fitch defeated Kuniyoshi Hironaka (decision)
Spencer Fisher defeated Dan Lauzon (TKO)
Yushin Okami defeated Kalib Starnes (TKO)
Clay Guida defeated Justin James (rear naked choke)
Kurt Pellegrino defeated Junior Assuncao (rear naked choke)

The Ultimate Fighter 4 Finale

11/11/06

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Matt Serra defeated Chris Lytle (decision, won *TUF* Welterweight Tournament)

Other Fights:

Travis Lutter defeated Patrick Côté (arm bar, won *TUF* Middleweight Tournament)
Din Thomas defeated Rich Clementi (rear naked choke)
Pete Spratt defeated Jeremy Jackson (submission, neck injury)
Scott Smith defeated Pete Sell (KO)
Charles McCarthy defeated Gideon Ray (arm bar)
Martin Kampmann defeated Thales Leites (decision)

UFC 65

11/18/06

ARCO Arena (Sacramento, California)

Main Event: Georges St. Pierre defeated Matt Hughes (TKO, won UFC Welterweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Tim Sylvia defeated Jeff Monson (decision)
Drew McFedries defeated Alessio Sakara (TKO)
Brandon Vera defeated Frank Mir (TKO)
Joe Stevenson defeated Dokonjonosuke Mishima (guillotine choke)
Nick Diaz defeated Gleison Tibau (TKO)

Antoni Hardonk defeated Sherman Pendergrast (KO)
James Irvin defeated Hector Ramirez (TKO)
Jake O'Brien defeated Josh Schockman (decision)

UFC Fight Night 7

12/13/06

MCAS Miramar (San Diego, California)

Main Event: Diego Sanchez defeated Joe Riggs (KO)

Other Fights:

Josh Koscheck defeated Jeff Joslin (decision)
Karo Parisyan defeated Drew Fickett (decision)
Marcus Davis defeated Shonie Carter (decision)
Alan Belcher defeated Jorge Santiago (KO)
Luigi Fioravanti defeated Dave Menne (TKO)
David Heath defeated Victor Valimaki (decision)
Brock Larson defeated Keita Nakamura (decision)
Logan Clark defeated Steve Byrnes (decision)

UFC 66

12/30/06

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Chuck Liddell defeated Tito Ortiz (TKO)

Other Fights:

Keith Jardine defeated Forrest Griffin (TKO)
Jason MacDonald defeated Chris Leben (guillotine choke)
Andrei Arlovski defeated Marcio Cruz (KO)
Michael Bisping defeated Eric Schafer (TKO)
Thiago Alves defeated Tony DeSouza (KO)
Gabriel Gonzaga defeated Carmelo Marrero (arm bar)
Yushin Okami defeated Rory Singer (submission to strikes)
Christian Wellish defeated Anthony Perosh (decision)

UFC Fight Night 8

1/25/07

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Hollywood, Florida)

Main Event: Rashad Evans defeated Sean Salmon (KO)

Other Fights:

Jake O'Brien defeated Heath Herring (decision)
Hermes Franca defeated Spencer Fisher (TKO)

Nate Marquardt defeated Dean Lister (decision)
Josh Burkman defeated Chad Reiner (decision)
Ed Herman defeated Chris Prince (arm bar)
Din Thomas defeated Clay Guida (decision)
Rich Clementi defeated Ross Pounton (rear naked choke)

UFC 67

2/3/07

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Travis Lutter (triangle choke)

Other Fights:

Quinton Jackson defeated Marvin Eastman (KO)
Mirko Filipovic defeated Eddie Sanchez (TKO)
Roger Huerta defeated John Halverson (TKO)
Patrick Côté defeated Scott Smith (decision)
Frank Edgar defeated Tyson Griffin (decision)
Terry Martin defeated Jorge Rivera (KO)
Lyoto Machida defeated Sam Hoger (decision)
Dustin Hazelett defeated Diego Saraiva (decision)

UFC 68

3/3/07

Nationwide Arena (Columbus, Ohio)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Tim Sylvia (decision, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Rich Franklin defeated Jason MacDonald (corner stoppage)
Matt Hughes defeated Chris Lytle (decision)
Martin Kampmann defeated Drew McFedries (arm triangle)
Jason Lambert defeated Renato Sobral (KO)
Matt Hamill defeated Rex Holman (TKO)
Jon Fitch defeated Luigi Fioravanti (rear naked choke)
Gleison Tibau defeated Jason Dent (decision)
Jamie Varner defeated Jason Gilliam (rear naked choke)

UFC Fight Night 9

4/5/07

The Palms Casino Resort (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Joe Stevenson defeated Melvin Guillard (guillotine choke)

Other Fights:

Justin McCully defeated Antoni Hardonk (decision)

Kenny Florian defeated Dokonjonosuke Mishima (rear naked choke)

Kuniyoshi Hironaka defeated Forrest Petz (decision)

Wilson Gouveia defeated Seth Petruzelli (guillotine choke)

Drew Fickett defeated Keita Nakamura (decision)

Kurt Pellegrino defeated Nate Mohr (ankle lock)

Roan Carneiro defeated Rich Clementi (decision)

Thiago Tavares defeated Naoyuki Kotani (decision)

UFC 69

4/7/07

Toyota Center (Houston, Texas)

Main Event: Matt Serra defeated Georges St. Pierre (TKO, won UFC Welterweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Josh Koscheck defeated Diego Sanchez (decision)

Roger Huerta defeated Leonard Garcia (decision)

Yushin Okami defeated Mike Swick (decision)

Kendall Grove defeated Alan Belcher (D'Arce choke)

Heath Herring defeated Brad Imes (decision)

Thales Leites defeated Pete Sell (decision)

Marcus Davis defeated Pete Spratt (Achilles lock)

Luke Cummo defeated Josh Haynes (KO)

UFC 70

4/21/07

Manchester Evening News Arena (Manchester, England)

Main Event: Gabriel Gonzaga defeated Mirko Filipovic (KO)

Other Fights:

Andrei Arlovski defeated Fabricio Werdum (decision)

Michael Bisping defeated Elvis Sinosic (TKO)

Lyoto Machida defeated David Heath (decision)

Cheick Kongo defeated Assuerio Silva (decision)

Terry Etim defeated Matt Grice (guillotine choke)

Junior Assuncao defeated David Lee (rear naked choke)

Alessio Sakara defeated Victor Valimaki (TKO)

Jess Liaudin defeated Dennis Siver (arm bar)

Paul Taylor defeated Edilberto de Oliveira (TKO)

UFC 71

5/26/07

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Quinton Jackson defeated Chuck Liddell (TKO, won UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Karo Parisyan defeated Josh Burkman (decision)

Terry Martin defeated Ivan Salaverry (TKO)

Houston Alexander defeated Keith Jardine (KO)

Kalib Starnes defeated Chris Leben (decision)

Thiago Silva defeated James Irvin (TKO)

Alan Belcher defeated Sean Salmon (guillotine choke)

Jeremy Stephens defeated Din Thomas (arm bar)

Wilson Gouveia defeated Carmelo Marrero (guillotine choke)

UFC Fight Night 10

6/12/07

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (Hollywood, Florida)

Main Event: Spencer Fisher defeated Sam Stout (decision)

Other Fights:

Jon Fitch defeated Roan Carneiro (rear naked choke)

Drew McFedries defeated Jordan Radev (KO)

Thiago Tavares defeated Jason Black (triangle choke)

Forrest Petz defeated Luigi Fioravanti (decision)

Tamdan McCrory defeated Pete Spratt (triangle choke)

Gleison Tibau defeated Jeff Cox (arm triangle)

Anthony Johnson defeated Chad Reiner (KO)

Nate Mohr defeated Luke Caudillo (decision)

UFC 72

6/16/07

The Odyssey (Belfast, Northern Ireland)

Main Event: Rich Franklin defeated Yushin Okami (decision)

Other Fights:

Forrest Griffin defeated Hector Ramirez (decision)

Tyson Griffin defeated Clay Guida (decision)

Ed Herman defeated Scott Smith (rear naked choke)

Jason MacDonald defeated Rory Singer (TKO)

Eddie Sanchez defeated Colin Robinson (TKO)

Dustin Hazelett defeated Stevie Lynch (anaconda choke)

Marcus Davis defeated Jason Tan (KO)

The Ultimate Fighter 5 Finale

6/23/07

Palms Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: B.J. Penn defeated Jens Pulver (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Nate Diaz defeated Manvel Gambaryan (injury, dislocated shoulder, won *TUF* Lightweight Tournament)

Thales Leites defeated Floyd Sword (arm triangle)

Roger Huerta defeated Doug Evans (TKO)

Joe Lauzon defeated Brandon Melendez (triangle choke)

Cole Miller defeated Andy Wang (TKO)

Rob Emerson vs. Gray Maynard (no contest)

Leonard Garcia defeated Allen Berube (rear naked choke)

Matt Wiman defeated Brian Geraghty (TKO)

UFC 73

7/7/07

ARCO Arena (Sacramento, California)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Nate Marquardt (TKO)

Other Fights:

Tito Ortiz vs. Rashad Evans (draw)

Sean Sherk defeated Hermes Franca

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Heath Herring (decision)

Kenny Florian defeated Alvin Robinson (TKO)

Stephan Bonnar defeated Mike Nickels (rear naked choke)

Jorge Gurgel defeated Diego Saraiva (decision)

Chris Lytle defeated Jason Gilliam (Kimura)

Frankie Edgar defeated Mark Bocek (TKO)

UFC 74

8/25/07

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Gabriel Gonzaga (TKO)

Other Fights:

Georges St. Pierre defeated Josh Koscheck (decision)

Roger Huerta defeated Alberto Crane (TKO)

Joe Stevenson defeated Kurt Pellegrino (decision)

Patrick Côté defeated Kendall Grove (KO)

Renato Sobral defeated David Heath (anaconda choke)

Frank Mir defeated Antoni Hardonk (Kimura)

Thales Leites defeated Ryan Jensen (arm bar)

Clay Guida defeated Marcus Aurelio (decision)

UFC 75

9/8/07

The O₂ Arena (London, England)

Main Event: Quinton Jackson defeated Dan Henderson (decision, unifies Pride Middleweight Championship and UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Michael Bisping defeated Matt Hamill (decision)

Cheick Kongo defeated Mirko Filipovic (decision)

Houston Alexander defeated Alessio Sakara (TKO)

Marcus Davis defeated Paul Taylor (arm bar)

Gleison Tibau defeated Terry Etim (decision)

Thiago Silva defeated Tomasz Drwal (KO)

Dennis Siver defeated Naoyuki Kotani (KO)

Jess Liaudin defeated Anthony Torres (TKO)

UFC Fight Night 11

9/19/07

The Palms Casino Resort (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Kenny Florian defeated Din Thomas (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Chris Leben defeated Terry Martin (KO)

Nate Diaz defeated Junior Assuncao (guillotine choke)

Nate Quarry defeated Pete Sell (KO)

Dustin Hazelett defeated Jonathan Goulet (arm bar)

Thiago Alves defeated Kuniyoshi Hironaka (submission to strikes)

Cole Miller defeated Leonard Garcia (decision)

Luke Cummo defeated Edilberto de Oliveira (TKO)

Gray Maynard defeated Joe Veres (KO)

UFC 76

9/22/07

Honda Center (Anaheim, California)

Main Event: Keith Jardine defeated Chuck Liddell (decision)

Other Fights:

Forrest Griffin defeated Mauricio Rua (rear naked choke)

Jon Fitch defeated Diego Sanchez (decision)

Lyoto Machida defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (decision)

Tyson Griffin defeated Thiago Tavares (decision)

Rich Clementi defeated Anthony Johnson (rear naked choke)

Jeremy Stephens defeated Diego Saraiva (decision)

Christian Wellisch defeated Scott Junk (heel hook)

Matt Wiman defeated Michihiro Omigawa (decision)

UFC 77

10/20/07

U.S. Bank Arena (Cincinnati, Ohio)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Rich Franklin (TKO)

Other Fights:

Tim Sylvia defeated Brandon Vera (decision)

Alvin Robinson defeated Jorge Gurgel (decision)

Stephan Bonnar defeated Eric Schafer (TKO)

Alan Belcher defeated Kalib Starnes (TKO)

Yushin Okami defeated Jason MacDonald (decision)

Demian Maia defeated Ryan Jensen (rear naked choke)

Josh Burkman defeated Forest Petz (decision)

Matt Grice defeated Jason Black (decision)

UFC 78

11/17/07

Prudential Center (Newark, New Jersey)

Main Event: Rashad Evans defeated Michael Bisping (split decision)

Other Fights:

Thiago Silva defeated Houston Alexander (KO)

Ed Herman defeated Joe Doerkson (KO)

Karo Parisyan defeated Ryo Chonan (decision)

Frank Edgar defeated Spencer Fisher (decision)

Thiago Alves defeated Chris Lytle (doctor stoppage)

Joe Lauzon defeated Jason Reinhardt (rear naked choke)

Marcus Aurelio defeated Luke Caudillo (TKO)

Akihiro Gono defeated Tamdan McCrory (arm bar)

The Ultimate Fighter 6 Finale

12/8/07

The Pearl at The Palms (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Roger Huerta defeated Clay Guida (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Mac Danzig defeated Tommy Speer (rear naked choke, won *TUF* Welterweight Tournament)

Jon Koppenhaver defeated Jared Rollins (TKO)

George Sotiropoulos defeated Billy Miles (rear naked choke)

Ben Saunders defeated Dan Barrera (decision)

Matt Arroyo defeated John Koloski (arm bar)

Jonathan Goulet defeated Paul Georgieff (rear naked choke)

Roman Mitichyan defeated Dorian Price (ankle lock)

Troy Mandaloniz defeated Richie Hightower (TKO)

UFC 79

12/29/07

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Georges St. Pierre defeated Matt Hughes (arm bar, won UFC Interim Welterweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Chuck Liddell defeated Wanderlei Silva (decision)
Rich Clementi defeated Melvin Guillard (rear
naked choke)
Eddie Sanchez defeated Soa Palelei (TKO)
Lyoto Machida defeated Rameau Thierry
Sokoudjou (arm triangle)
Manvel Gamuryan defeated Nate Mohr (Achilles
lock)
Dean Lister defeated Jordan Radev (decision)
Roan Carneiro defeated Tony DeSouza (TKO)
James Irvin defeated Luiz Cane (DQ)
Mark Bocek defeated Doug Evans (decision)

UFC 80

1/19/08

Metro Radio Arena (Newcastle, England)

Main Event: B.J. Penn defeated Joe Stevenson (rear
naked choke)

Other Fights:

Fabricio Werdum defeated Gabriel Gonzaga (TKO)
Wilson Gouveia defeated Jason Lambert (KO)
Jorge Rivera defeated Kendall Grove (TKO)
Marcus Davis defeated Jess Liaudin (KO)
Sam Stout defeated Per Eklund (decision)
Alessio Sakara defeated James Lee (TKO)
Antoni Hardonk defeated Colin Robinson (TKO)
Paul Kelly defeated Paul Taylor (decision)

UFC Fight Night 12

1/23/08

The Palms Casino Resort (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Mike Swick defeated Josh Burkman
(decision)

Other Fights:

Patrick Côté defeated Drew McFedries (TKO)
Thiago Tavares defeated Michihiro Omigawa
(decision)
Nate Diaz defeated Alvin Robinson (triangle
choke)
Kurt Pellegrino defeated Alberto Crane (TKO)
Gray Maynard defeated Dennis Siver (decision)
Jeremy Stephens defeated Cole Miller (TKO)
Corey Hill defeated Joe Veres (TKO)
Matt Wiman defeated Justin Bucholz (rear naked
choke)

UFC 81

2/2/08

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Tim
Sylvia (guillotine choke, won UFC Interim Heavyweight
Championship)

Other Fights:

Frank Mir defeated Brock Lesnar (knee bar)
Nate Marquardt defeated Jeremy Horn (guillotine
choke)
Ricardo Almeida defeated Rob Yundt (guillotine
choke)
Tyson Griffin defeated Gleison Tibau (decision)
Chris Lytle defeated Kyle Bradley (TKO)
Marvin Eastman defeated Terry Martin (decision)
Tim Boetsch defeated David Heath (TKO)
Rob Emerson defeated Keita Nakamura
(decision)

UFC 82

3/1/08

Nationwide Arena (Columbus, Ohio)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Dan Henderson
(rear naked choke, unifies Pride Welterweight
Championship and UFC Middleweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Heath Herring defeated Cheick Kongo (decision)
Yushin Okami defeated Evan Tanner (KO)
Chris Leben defeated Alessio Sakara (TKO)
Jon Fitch defeated Chris Wilson (decision)
Andrei Arlovski defeated Jake O'Brien (TKO)
Josh Koscheck defeated Dustin Hazelett (KO)
Diego Sanchez defeated David Bielkheden
(submission to strikes)
Luigi Fioravanti defeated Luke Cummo (decision)
Jorge Gurgel defeated John Halverson (decision)

UFC Fight Night 13

4/2/08

Broomfield Event Center (Broomfield, Colorado)

Main Event: Kenny Florian defeated Joe Lauzon (TKO)

Other Fights:

Gray Maynard defeated Frank Edgar (decision)
Thiago Alves defeated Karo Parisyan (TKO)
Matt Hamill defeated Tim Boetsch (TKO)

Nate Diaz defeated Kurt Pellegrino (triangle choke)
James Irvin defeated Houston Alexander (TKO)
Josh Neer defeated Din Thomas (decision)
Marcus Aurelio defeated Ryan Roberts (arm bar)
Manvel Gamburyan defeated Jeff Cox (guillotine choke)
Clay Guida defeated Samy Schiavo (TKO)
George Sotiropoulos defeated Romany Mitichyan (TKO)
Anthony Johnson defeated Tommy Speer (KO)

UFC 83

4/19/08

Bell Centre (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

Main Event: Georges St. Pierre defeated Matt Serra (TKO, won UFC Welterweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Rich Franklin defeated Travis Lutter (TKO)
Michael Bisping defeated Charles McCarthy (TKO)
Nate Quarry defeated Kalib Starnes (decision)
Mac Danzig defeated Mark Bocek (rear naked choke)
Jason Day defeated Alan Belcher (TKO)
Demian Maia defeated Ed Herman (triangle choke)
Jason MacDonald defeated Joe Doerkson (TKO)
Rich Clementi defeated Sam Stout (decision)
Cain Velasquez defeated Brad Morris (TKO)
Jonathan Goulet defeated Kuniyoshi Hironaka (TKO)

UFC 84

5/24/08

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: B.J. Penn defeated Sean Sherk (TKO)

Other Fights:

Wanderlei Silva defeated Keith Jardine (KO)
Goran Reljic defeated Wilson Gouveia (TKO)
Lyoto Machida defeated Tito Ortiz (decision)
Thiago Silva defeated Antonio Mendes (submission to strikes)
Rousimar Palhares defeated Ivan Salaverry (arm bar)
Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (TKO)

Rich Clementi defeated Terry Etim (decision)
Yoshiyuki Yoshida defeated Jon Koppenhaver (anaconda choke)
Dong-Hyun Kim defeated Jason Tan (TKO)
Shane Carwin defeated Christian Wellisch (KO)

UFC 85

6/7/08

O₂ Arena (London, England)

Main Event: Thiago Alves defeated Matt Hughes (TKO)

Other Fights:

Michael Bisping defeated Jason Day (TKO)
Mike Swick defeated Marcus Davis (decision)
Thales Leites defeated Nate Marquardt (decision)
Fabricio Werdum defeated Brandon Vera (TKO)
Martin Kampmann defeated Jorge Rivera (guillotine choke)
Matt Wiman defeated Thiago Tavares (KO)
Kevin Burns defeated Roan Carneiro (triangle choke)
Luiz Cane defeated Jason Lambert (TKO)
Antoni Hardonk defeated Eddie Sanchez (KO)
Paul Taylor defeated Jess Liaudin (decision)

The Ultimate Fighter 7 Finale

6/21/08

The Pearl at The Palms (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Kendall Grove defeated Evan Tanner (decision)

Other Fights:

Amir Sadollah defeated C.B. Dollaway (arm bar, won *TUF* Middleweight Tournament)
Diego Sanchez defeated Luigi Fioravanti (TKO)
Spencer Fisher defeated Jeremy Stephens (decision)
Matthew Riddle defeated Dante Rivera (decision)
Dustin Hazelett defeated Josh Burkman (arm bar)
Drew McFedries defeated Marvin Eastman (KO)
Matt Brown defeated Matt Arroyo (TKO)
Dean Lister defeated Jeremy Horn (guillotine choke)
Rob Kimmons defeated Rob Yundt (guillotine choke)

UFC 86

7/5/08

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Forrest Griffin defeated Quinton Jackson (decision, won UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Patrick Côté defeats Ricardo Almeida (decision)

Joe Stevenson defeated Gleison Tibau (guillotine choke)

Josh Koscheck defeated Chris Lytle (decision)

Tyson Griffin defeated Marcus Aurelio (decision)

Gabriel Gonzaga defeated Justin McCully (Americana)

Justin Buchholz defeated Corey Hill (rear naked choke)

Melvin Guillard defeated Dennis Siver (KO)

Cole Miller defeated Jorge Gurgel (triangle choke)

UFC Fight Night 14

7/19/08

Palms Casino Resort (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated James Irvin (KO)

Other Fights:

Brandon Vera defeated Reese Andy (decision)

Frank Edgar defeated Hermes Franca (decision)

Cain Velasquez defeated Jake O'Brien (TKO)

Kevin Burns defeated Anthony Johnson (TKO)

C.B. Dollaway defeated Jesse Taylor (Peruvian necktie)

Tim Credeur defeated Cale Yarbrough (TKO)

Nate Loughran defeated Johnny Rees (triangle choke)

Shannon Gugerty defeated Dale Hartt (rear naked choke)

Rory Markham defeated Brodie Farber (KO)

Brad Blackburn defeated James Giboo (TKO)

UFC 87

8/9/08

Target Center (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Main Event: Georges St. Pierre defeated Jon Fitch (decision)

Other Fights:

Brock Lesnar defeated Heath Herring (decision)

Rob Emerson defeated Manny Gamburyan (KO)

Kenny Florian defeated Roger Huerta (decision)

Demian Maia defeated Jason MacDonald (rear naked choke)

Tamdan McCrory defeated Luke Cummo (decision)

Cheick Kongo defeated Dan Evensen (TKO)

Jon Jones defeated Andre Gusmao (decision)

Chris Wilson defeated Steve Bruno (decision)

Ben Saunders defeated Ryan Thomas (arm bar)

UFC 88

9/6/08

Phillips Arena (Atlanta, Georgia)

Main Event: Rashad Evans defeated Chuck Liddell (KO)

Other Fights:

Rich Franklin defeated Matt Hamill (TKO)

Dan Henderson defeated Rousimar Palhares (decision)

Nate Marquardt defeated Martin Kampmann (TKO)

Dong-Hyung Kim defeated Matt Brown (decision)

Kurt Pellegrino defeated Thiago Tavares (decision)

Ryo Chonan defeated Roan Carneiro (decision)

Tim Boetsch defeated Mike Patt (TKO)

Jason MacDonald defeated Jason Lambert (rear naked choke)

UFC Fight Night 15

9/17/08

Omaha Civic Auditorium (Omaha, Nebraska)

Main Event: Nate Diaz defeated Josh Neer (decision)

Other Fights:

Clay Guida defeated Mac Danzig (decision)

Alan Belcher defeated Ed Herman (decision)

Eric Schafer defeated Houston Alexander (arm triangle)

Alessio Sakara defeated Joe Vedebo (KO)

Wilson Gouveia defeated Ryan Jensen (arm bar)

Joe Lauzon defeated Kyle Bradley (TKO)

Jason Brilz defeated Brad Morris (TKO)

Mike Massenzio defeated Drew McFedries (Kimura)

Dan Miller defeated Rob Kimmons (rear naked choke)

UFC 89

10/18/08

National Indoor Arena (Birmingham, England)

Main Event: Michael Bisping defeated Chris Leben (decision)

Other Fights:

Keith Jardine defeated Brandon Vera (decision)

Luiz Cane defeated Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou (TKO)

Chris Lytle defeated Paul Taylor (decision)

Marcus Davis defeated Paul Kelly (guillotine choke)

Shane Carwin defeated Neil Wain (TKO)

Dan Hardy defeated Akihiro Gono (decision)

Terry Etim defeated Sam Stout (decision)

David Bielkheden defeated Jess Liaudin (decision)

Jim Miller defeated David Baron (rear naked choke)

Per Eklund defeated Samy Schiavo (rear naked choke)

UFC 90

10/25/08

Allstate Arena (Rosemont, Illinois)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Patrick Côté (TKO, knee injury)

Other Fights:

Thiago Alves defeated Josh Koscheck (decision)

Gray Maynard defeated Rich Clementi (decision)

Junior Dos Santos defeated Fabricio Werdum (KO)

Sean Sherk defeated Tyson Griffin (decision)

Thales Leites defeated Drew McFedries (rear naked choke)

Spencer Fisher defeated Shannon Gugerty (triangle choke)

Dan Miller defeated Matt Horwich (decision)

Hermes Franca defeated Marcus Aurelio (decision)

Pete Sell defeated Josh Burkman (decision)

UFC 91

11/15/08

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Brock Lesnar defeated Randy Couture (TKO, won UFC Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Kenny Florian defeated Joe Stevenson (rear naked choke)

Dustin Hazelett defeated Tamdan McCrory (arm bar)

Gabriel Gonzaga defeated Josh Hendricks (TKO)

Demian Maia defeated Nate Quarry (rear naked choke)

Aaron Riley defeated Jorge Gurgel (decision)

Jeremy Stephens defeated Rafael dos Anjos (KO)

Mark Bocek defeated Alvin Robinson (rear naked choke)

Matt Brown defeated Ryan Thomas (arm bar)

UFC: Fight for the Troops (Fight Night 16)

12/10/08

Crown Coliseum (Fayetteville, North Carolina)

Main Event: Josh Koscheck defeated Yoshiyuki Yoshida (KO)

Other Fights:

Mike Swick defeated Jonathan Goulet (KO)

Steve Cantwell defeated Razak Al-Hussan (arm bar)

Tim Credeur defeated Nate Loughran (TKO)

Matt Wiman defeated Jim Miller (decision)

Luigi Fioravanti defeated Brodie Farber (decision)

Steve Bruno defeated Johnny Rees (rear naked choke)

Ben Saunders defeated Brandon Wolff (TKO)

Dale Hart defeated Corey Hill (TKO, leg injury)

Justin McCully defeated Eddie Sanchez (decision)

The Ultimate Fighter 8 Finale

12/13/08

The Pearl at The Palms (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Efrain Escudero defeated Phillipe Nover (decision, won *TUF* Lightweight Tournament)

Other Fights:

Ryan Bader defeated Vinicius Magalhaes (TKO, won *TUF* light heavyweight champion)

Anthony Johnson defeated Kevin Burns (KO)

Wilson Gouveia defeated Jason MacDonald (submission to strikes)

Junie Browning defeated Dave Kaplan (arm bar)

Krzysztof Soszynski defeated Shane Primm (Kimura)

Eliot Marshall defeated Jules Bruchez (rear naked choke)
Tom Lawlor defeated Kyle Kingsbury (decision)
Shane Nelson defeated George Roop (decision)
Rolando Delgado defeated John Polakowski (guillotine choke)

UFC 92

12/27/08

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Rashad Evans defeated Forrest Griffin (TKO, won UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Frank Mir defeated Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (TKO, won UFC Interim Heavyweight Championship)
C.B. Dollaway defeated Mike Massenzio (TKO)
Quinton Jackson defeated Wanderlei Silva (KO)
Cheick Kongo defeated Mostapaha Al Turk (TKO)
Yushin Okami defeated Dean Lister (decision)
Antoni Hardonk defeated Mike Wessel (TKO)
Matt Hamill defeated Reese Andy (TKO)
Brad Blackburn defeated Ryo Chonan (decision)
Patrick Barry defeated Dan Evensen (TKO)

UFC 93

1/17/09

The O₂ Dublin (Dublin, Ireland)

Main Event: Dan Henderson defeated Rich Franklin (decision)

Other Fights:

Mauricio Rua defeated Mark Coleman (TKO)
Rousimar Palhares defeated Jeremy Horn (decision)
Alan Belcher defeated Denis Kang (guillotine choke)
Marcus Davis defeated Chris Lytle (decision)
John Hathaway defeated Thomas Egan (TKO)
Martin Kampmann defeated Alexandre Barros (TKO)
Eric Schafer defeated Antonio Mendes (TKO)
Tomasz Drwal defeated Ivan Serati (KO)
Dennis Siver defeated Nate Mohr (TKO)

UFC 94

1/31/09

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Georges St. Pierre defeated B.J. Penn (corner stoppage)

Other Fights:

Lyoto Machida defeated Thiago Silva (KO)
Jon Jones defeated Stephan Bonnar (decision)
Karo Pariysan vs. Dong-Hyun Kim (no contest)
Clay Guida defeated Nate Diaz (decision)
Jon Fitch defeated Akihiro Gono (decision)
Thiago Tavares defeated Manvel Gamburyan (decision)
John Howard defeated Chris Wilson (decision)
Jake O'Brien defeated Christian Wellisch (decision)
Dan Cramer defeated Matt Arroyo (decision)

UFC Fight Night 17

2/7/09

USF Sun Dome (Tampa, Florida)

Main Event: Joe Lauzon defeated Jeremy Stephens (arm bar)

Other Fights:

Josh Neer defeated Mac Danzig (triangle choke)
Cain Velasquez defeated Denis Stojnic (TKO)
Anthony Johnson defeated Luigi Fioravanti (TKO)
Kurt Pellegrino defeated Rob Emerson (rear naked choke)
Dan Miller defeated Jake Rosholt (guillotine choke)
Matt Veatch defeated Matt Grice (TKO)
Gleison Tibau defeated Rich Clementi (guillotine choke)
Nick Catone defeated Derek Downey (key lock)
Matthew Riddle defeated Steve Bruno (decision)

UFC 95

2/21/09

O₂ Arena (London, England)

Main Event: Diego Sanchez defeated Joe Stevenson (decision)

Other Fights:

Dan Hardy defeated Rory Markham (KO)
Nate Marquardt defeated Wilson Gouveia (TKO)

Demian Maia defeated Chael Sonnen (triangle choke)
Paulo Thiago defeated Josh Koscheck (KO)
Terry Etim defeated Brian Cobb (TKO)
Junior Dos Santos defeated Stefan Struve (TKO)
Evan Dunham defeated Per Eklund (TKO)
Mike Ciesnolewicz defeated Neil Grove (heel hook)
Paul Kelly defeated Troy Mandaloniz (decision)

UFC 96

3/7/09

Nationwide Arena (Columbus, Ohio)

Main Event: Quinton Jackson defeated Keith Jardine (decision)

Other Fights:

Shane Carwin defeated Gabriel Gonzaga (KO)
Matt Brown defeated Pete Sell (TKO)
Matt Hamill defeated Mark Munoz (KO)
Gray Maynard defeated Jim Miller (decision)
Tamdun McCrory defeated Ryan Madigan (submission to strikes)
Kendall Grove defeated Jason Day (TKO)
Jason Brilz defeated Tim Boetsch (decision)
Brandon Vera defeated Mike Patt (TKO)
Shane Nelson defeated Aaron Riley (TKO)

UFC Fight Night 18

4/1/09

Sommet Center (Nashville, Tennessee)

Main Event: Martin Kampmann defeated Carlos Condit (decision)

Other Fights:

Ryan Bader defeated Carmelo Marrero (decision)
Tyson Griffin defeated Rafael dos Anjos (decision)
Cole Miller defeated Junie Browning (guillotine choke)
Gleison Tibau defeated Jeremy Stephens (decision)
Ricardo Almeida defeated Matt Horwich (decision)
Brock Larson defeated Jesse Sanders (rear naked choke)
Tim Credeur defeated Nick Catone (guillotine choke)
Jorge Rivera defeated Nissen Osterneck (decision)

Rob Kimmons defeated Joe Vedepe (guillotine choke)

Aaron Simpson defeated Tim McKenzie (TKO)

UFC 97

4/18/09

Bell Centre (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

Main Event: Anderson Silva defeated Thales Leites (decision)

Other Fights:

Sam Stout defeated Matt Wiman (decision)
Mauricio Rua defeated Chuck Liddell (TKO)
Krzysztof Soszynski defeated Brian Stann (Kimura)
Cheick Kongo defeated Antoni Hardonk (TKO)
Luiz Cane defeated Steve Cantwell (decision)
Denis Kang defeated Xavier Fouta-Pokam (decision)
Nate Quarry defeated Jason MacDonald (TKO)
Ed Herman defeated David Loiseau (decision)
Mark Bocek defeated David Bielkheden (rear naked choke)
T.J. Grant defeated Ryo Chonan (decision)
Eliot Marshall defeated Vinicius Magalhaes (decision)

UFC 98

5/23/09

MGM Grand (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Lyoto Machida defeated Rashad Evans (KO, won UFC Light Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Matt Hughes defeated Matt Serra (decision)
Drew McFedries defeated Xavier Fouta-Pokam (TKO)
Chael Sonnen defeated Dan Miller (decision)
Frank Edgar defeated Sean Sherk (decision)
Brock Larson defeated Mike Pyle (arm triangle)
Tim Hague defeated Patrick Barry (guillotine choke)
Kyle Bradley defeated Phillipe Nover (TKO)
Krzysztof Soszynski defeated Andre Gusmao (KO)
Yoshiyuki Yoshida defeated Brandon Wolff (guillotine choke)
George Roop defeated Daved Kaplan (decision)

UFC 99

6/13/09

LANXESS Arena (Cologne, Germany)

Main Event: Rich Franklin defeated Wanderlei Silva (decision)

Other Fights:

Cain Velasquez defeated Cheick Kongo (decision)

Mirko Filipovic defeated Mostapha Al Turk (TKO)

Mike Swick defeated Ben Saunders (TKO)

Spencer Fisher defeated Caol Uno (decision)

Dan Hardy defeated Marcus Davis (decision)

Terry Etim defeated Justin Buchholz (D'Arce choke)

Dennis Siver defeated Dale Hartt (rear naked choke)

Paul Taylor defeated Peter Sobotta (decision)

Paul Kelly defeated Rolando Delgado (decision)

Stefan Struve defeated Denis Stojnic (rear naked choke)

John Hathaway defeated Rick Story (decision)

The Ultimate Fighter 9 Finale

6/20/09

The Pearl at The Palms (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Diego Sanchez defeated Clay Guida (decision)

Other Fights:

James Wilks defeated DaMarques Johnson (rear naked choke, won *TUF* Welterweight Tournament)

Chris Lytle defeated Kevin Burns (decision)

Ross Pearson defeated Andre Winner (decision, won *TUF* Lightweight Tournament)

Joe Stevenson defeated Nate Diaz (decision)

Melvin Guillard defeated Gleison Tibau (decision)

Brad Blackburn defeated Edgar Garcia (decision)

Tomasz Drwal defeated Mike Ciesnolewicz (TKO)

Nick Osipczak defeated Frank Lester (rear naked choke)

Jason Dent defeated Cameron Dollar (anaconda choke)

UFC 100

7/11/09

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Brock Lesnar defeated Frank Mir (TKO, unified UFC Heavyweight Championship and UFC Interim Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Georges St. Pierre defeated Thiago Alves (decision)

Dan Henderson defeated Michael Bisping (KO)

Yoshihiro Akiyama defeated Alan Belcher (decision)

Jon Fitch defeated Paulo Thiago (decision)

Mark Coleman defeated Stephan Bonnar (decision)

Jon Jones defeated Jake O'Brien (guillotine choke)

Jim Miller defeated Mac Danzig (decision)

Dong-Hyun Kim defeated T.J. Grant (decision)

Tom Lawlor defeated C.B. Dollaway (guillotine choke)

Shannon Gugerty defeated Matt Grice (guillotine choke)

UFC 101

8/8/09

Wachovia Center (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Main Event: B.J. Penn defeated Kenny Florian (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Anderson Silva defeated Forrest Griffin (KO)

Aaron Riley defeated Shane Nelson (decision)

Johnny Hendricks defeated Amir Sadollah (TKO)

Ricardo Almeida defeated Kendall Grove (decision)

Kurt Pellegrino defeated Josh Neer (decision)

John Howard defeated Tamdan McCrory (decision)

Alessio Sakara defeated Thales Leites (decision)

Matt Riddle defeated Dan Cramer (decision)

George Sotiropoulos defeated George Roop (Kimura)

Jesse Lennox defeated Danillo Villefort (TKO)

UFC 102

8/29/09

Rose Garden (Portland, Oregon)

Main Event: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Randy Couture (decision)

Other Fights:

Thiago Silva defeated Keith Jardine (KO)

Jake Rosholt defeated Chris Leben (arm triangle)
Nate Marquardt defeated Demian Maia (KO)
Brandon Vera defeated Krzysztof Soszynski (decision)
Gabriel Gonzaga defeated Chris Tuchscherer (TKO)
Mike Russow defeated Justin McCully (decision)
Aaron Simpson defeated Ed Herman (TKO)
Todd Duffee defeated Tim Hague (KO)
Mark Munoz defeated Nick Catone (decision)
Evan Dunham defeated Marcus Aurelio (decision)

UFC Fight Night 19

9/16/09

Cox Convention Center (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)

Main Event: Nate Diaz defeated Melvin Guillard (guillotine choke)

Other Fights:

Gray Maynard defeated Roger Huerta (decision)
Carlos Condit defeated Jake Ellenberger (decision)
Nate Quarry defeated Tim Credeur (decision)
Brian Stann defeated Steve Cantwell (decision)
Mike Pyle defeated Chris Wilson (guillotine choke)
C.B. Dollaway defeated Jay Silva (decision)
Jeremy Stephens defeated Justin Buchholz (TKO)
Mike Pierce defeated Brock Larson (decision)
Ryan Jensen defeated Steve Steinbeiss (guillotine choke)

UFC 103

9/19/09

American Airlines Center (Dallas, Texas)

Main Event: Vitor Belfort defeated Rich Franklin (KO)

Other Fights:

Junior Dos Santos defeated Mirko Filipovic (submission)
Paul Daley defeated Martin Kampmann (TKO)
Josh Koscheck defeated Frank Trigg (TKO)
Tyson Griffin defeated Hermes Franca (TKO)
Efrain Escudero defeated Cole Miller (KO)
Tomasz Drwal defeated Drew McFedries (rear naked choke)
Jim Miller defeated Steve Lopez (TKO)
Nik Lentz defeated Rafaello Oliveira (decision)
Ricky Story defeated Brian Foster (arm triangle)
Eliot Marshal defeated Jason Brilz (decision)

Vladimir Matyushenko defeated Igor Pokrajac (decision)
Rafael dos Anjos defeated Rob Emerson (decision)

UFC 104

10/28/09

Staples Center (Los Angeles, California)

Main Event: Lyoto Machida defeated Mauricio Rua (decision)

Other Fights:

Cain Velasquez defeated Ben Rothwell (TKO)
Gleison Tibau defeated Josh Neer (decision)
Joe Stevenson defeated Spencer Fisher (submission to strikes)
Anthony Johnson defeated Yoshiyuki Yoshidas (TKO)
Ryan Bader defeated Eric Schafer (decision)
Patrick Barry defeated Antoni Hardonk (TKO)
Chael Sonnen defeated Yushin Okami (decision)
Jorge Rivera defeated Rob Kimmons (TKO)
Kyle Kingsbury defeated Razak Al-Hassan (decision)
Stefan Struve defeated Chase Gormley (triangle choke)

UFC 105

11/14/09

Manchester Evening News Arena (Manchester, England)

Main Event: Randy Couture defeated Brandon Vera (decision)

Other Fights:

Dan Hardy defeated Mike Swick (decision)
Michael Bisping defeated Denis Kang (TKO)
Matt Brown defeated James Wilks (TKO)
Ross Pearson defeated Aaron Riley (doctor stoppage)
John Hathaway defeated Paul Taylor (decision)
Terry Etim defeated Shannon Gugerty (guillotine choke)
Nick Osipczak defeated Matthew Riddle (TKO)
Dennis Siver defeated Paul Kelly (TKO)
Alexander Gustafsson defeated Jared Hamman (KO)
Andre Winner defeated Rolando Delgado (KO)

UFC 106

11/21/09

Mandalay Bay Events Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Forrest Griffin defeated Tito Ortiz (decision)

Other Fights:

Josh Koscheck defeated Anthony Johnson (rear naked choke)

Paulo Thiago defeated Jacob Volkman (decision)

Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Luiz Cane (TKO)

Amir Sadollah defeated Phil Baroni (decision)

Ben Saunders defeated Marcus Davis (KO)

Kendall Grove defeated Jake Rosholt (triangle choke)

Brian Foster defeated Brock Larson (TKO)

Caol Uno defeated Fabricio Camoes (draw)

George Sotiropoulos defeated Jason Dent (arm bar)

The Ultimate Fighter 10 Finale

12/5/09

The Pearl at The Palms (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Roy Nelson defeated Brendan Schaub (KO, won *TUF* Heavyweight Tournament)

Other Fights:

Mat Hamill defeated Jon Jones (DQ)

Kimbo Slice defeated Houston Alexander (decision)

Frank Edgar defeated Matt Veach (rear naked choke)

Matt Mitrione defeated Marcus Jones (KO)

James McSweeney defeated Darrill Schoonover (TKO)

Jon Madsen defeated Justin Wren (decision)

Brian Stann defeated Rodney Wallace (decision)

John Howard defeated Dennis Hallman (KO)

Mark Bocek defeated Joe Brammar (rear naked choke)

UFC 107

12/12/09

FedExForum (Memphis, Tennessee)

Main Event: B.J. Penn defeated Diego Sanchez (TKO)

Other Fights:

Frank Mir defeated Cheick Kongo (guillotine choke)

Jon Fitch defeated Mike Pierce (decision)

Kenny Florian defeated Clay Guida (rear naked choke)

Stefan Struve defeated Paul Buentello (decision)

Alan Belcher defeated Wilson Gouveia (TKO)

Matt Wiman defeated Shane Nelson (decision)

Johnny Hendricks defeated Ricardo Funch (decision)

Rousimar Palhares defeated Lucio Linhares (heel hook)

DaMarques Johnson defeated Edgar Garcia (triangle choke)

T.J. Grant defeated Kevin Burns (TKO)

MOST CUMULATIVE TIME FIGHTING IN A UFC RING (THROUGH 2009)

1. Randy Couture: 264 minutes in 21 fights
2. Tito Ortiz: 256 minutes in 22 fights
3. B.J. Penn: 208 minutes in 16 fights
4. Matt Hughes: 199 minutes in 21 fights
5. Chuck Liddell: 199 minutes in 22 fights
6. Georges St. Pierre: 178 minutes in 15 fights
7. Sean Sherk: 171 minutes in 11 fights
8. Pedro Rizzo: 167 minutes in 14 fights
9. Jon Fitch: 163 minutes in 12 fights
10. Chris Lytle: 163 minutes in 15 fights
11. Diego Sanchez: 157 minutes in 13 fights
12. Rich Franklin: 155 minutes in 16 fights
13. Matt Serra: 150 minutes in 12 fights
14. Hermes Franca: 149 minutes in 11 fights
15. Karo Parisyan: 149 minutes in 12 fights
16. Ken Shamrock: 146 minutes in 15 fights
17. Josh Koscheck: 141 minutes in 16 fights
18. Forrest Griffin: 141 minutes in 12 fights
19. Tim Sylvia: 137 minutes in 13 fights
20. Spencer Fisher: 133 minutes in 12 fights

MOST FIGHTS IN A UFC RING (THROUGH 2009)

Tito Ortiz: 22 fights (16-6)

Chuck Liddell: 22 fights (14-7-1)

Randy Couture: 21 fights (14-7)

Matt Hughes: 21 fights (16-5)

David Abbott: 18 fights (8-10)
 Evan Tanner: 17 fights (11-6)
 Rich Franklin: 16 fights (12-4)
 Josh Koscheck: 16 fights (12-4)
 B.J. Penn: 16 fights (11-4-1)
 Ken Shamrock: 15 fights (7-6-2)
 Georges St. Pierre: 15 fights (13-2)
 Frank Mir: 15 fights (11-4)
 Chris Lytle: 15 fights (6-9)
 Royce Gracie: 14 fights (11-2-1)
 Pedro Rizzo: 14 fights (9-5)
 Andrei Arlovski: 14 fights (10-4)
 Tim Sylvia: 13 fights (9-4)
 Kenny Florian: 13 fights (10-3)
 Jeremy Horn: 13 fights (6-7)
 Diego Sanchez: 13 fights (10-3)
 Dan Severn: 13 fights (9-4)
 Chris Leben: 13 fights (8-5)
 Vitor Belfort: 12 fights (8-4)
 Thiago Alves: 12 fights (9-3)
 Spencer Fisher: 12 fights (8-4)
 Matt Serra: 12 fights (6-6)
 Matt Lindland: 12 fights (9-3)
 Marcus Davis: 12 fights (8-4)
 Karo Parisyan: 12 fights (9-3)
 Jon Fitch: 12 fights (11-1)
 Joe Stevenson: 12 fights (8-4)
 Forrest Griffin: 12 fights (8-4)

MOST DAYS BETWEEN FIGHTS IN UFC

Royce Gracie: 4,068 days (UFC 5, 4/7/95: DRAW Ken Shamrock – UFC 60, 5/27/06: LOST Matt Hughes)
Mark Coleman: 3,662 days (UFC 18, 1/8/99: LOST Pedro Rizzo – UFC 93, 1/17/09: LOST Mauricio Rua)
Dan Henderson: 3,403 days (UFC 17, 5/15/98: WON Carlos Newton – UFC 75, 9/8/07: LOST Quinton Jackson)
Wanderlei Silva: 2,815 days (UFC 25, 4/14/00: LOST Tito Ortiz – UFC 79, 12/29/07: LOST Chuck Liddell)
Mike Van Arsdale: 2,528 days (UFC 17, 5/15/98: WON Joe Pardo – UFC 52, 4/16/05 WON John Marsh)
Ricardo Almeida: 2,213 days (UFC 35, 1/11/02: LOST Andrei Semenov – UFC 81, 2/2/08 WON Rob Yundt)
John Alessio: 2,178 days (UFC 26, 6/9/00: LOST Pat Miletich – UFC 60, 5/27/06: LOST Diego Sanchez)

Ken Shamrock: 2,176 days (Ultimate Ultimate 96, 12/7/96: WON Brian Johnston – UFC 40, 11/22/02: LOST Tito Ortiz)

Caol Uno: 2,087 days (UFC 44, 9/26/03: LOST Hermes Franca – UFC 99, 6/13/09: LOST Spencer Fisher)

Jason Delucia: 2,079 days (UFC 2, 3/11/94: LOST Royce Gracie – UFC 23, 11/19/99: LOST Joe Slick)

FEWEST DAYS BETWEEN FIGHTS IN UFC

Same-day fights:

UFC 1: Gerard Gordeau, Ken Shamrock, Kevin Rosier, Royce Gracie

UFC 2: Jason Delucia, Johnny Rhodes, Orlando Weit, Patrick Smith, Remco Pardoel, Royce Gracie, Scott Morris

UFC 3: Harold Howard, Ken Shamrock, Royce Gracie

UFC 4: Dan Severn, Keith Hackney, Marcus Bossett, Royce Gracie

UFC 5: Dan Severn, Dave Beneteau, Oleg Taktarov, Todd Medina

UFC 6: Anthony Macias, David Abbott, Oleg Taktarov, Paul Varelans

UFC 7: Marco Ruas, Mark Hall, Paul Varelans, Remco Pardoel

Ultimate Ultimate 1: Dan Severn, David Abbott, Marco Ruas, Oleg Taktarov

UFC 8: Don Frye, Gary Goodridge, Jerry Bohlander, Sam Adkins

UFC 10: Brian Johnston, Don Frye, Gary Goodridge, Mark Coleman

UFC 11: Brian Johnston, David Abbott, Mark Coleman, Scott Ferrozzo

Ultimate Ultimate 2: David Abbott, Don Frye, Mark Hall, Steve Nelmark

UFC 12: Jerry Bohlander, Nick Sanzo, Scott Ferrozzo, Vitor Belfort

UFC 13: Guy Mezger, Randy Couture, Steven Graham, Tito Ortiz

UFC 14: Dan Bobish, Kevin Jackson, Mark Kerr, Tony Fryklund

UFC 15: Dwayne Cason, Mark Kerr

UFC 15.5: Kazushi Sakuraba, Marcus Silveira

UFC 16: Chris Brennan, Pat Miletich

UFC 17: Carlos Newton, Dan Henderson

Multiple fights in one day totals

Royce Gracie: 12 fights in 4 events

David Abbott: 10 fights in 4 events

Don Frye: 9 fights in 3 events

Dan Severn: 9 fights in 3 events

Oleg Taktarov: 8 fights in 3 events

Remco Pardoel, Paul Varelans, Mark Coleman, Marco

Ruas, Gary Goodridge: 5 fights in 2 events

Scott Ferrozzo, Patrick Smith, Mark Kerr, Mark Hall,

Brian Johnston, Ken Shamrock, Jerry Bohlander,

Patrick Smith: 4 fights in 1 event (UFC 2)

Gerard Gordeau, Johnny Rhodes, Dave Beneteau,

Harold Howard: 3 fights in 1 event

Vitor Belfort, Kevin Jackson, Kevin Rosier, Jason

Delucia, Marcus Bossett, Marcus Silveira, Keith

Hackney, Guy Mezger, Kazushi Sakuraba, Nick

Sanzo, Dan Bobish, Orlando Weit, Pat Miletich,

Carlos Newton, Chris Brennan, Randy Couture, Dan

Henderson, Anthony Macias, Sam Adkins, Dwayne

Cason, Scott Morris, Steve Nelmark, Steven

Graham, Tito Ortiz, Todd Medina, Tony Fryklund: 2

fights in 1 event

(Harold Howard actually threw in the towel at the start of the Gracie match at UFC 3, so you could deduct a fight from each of their totals.)

Jason MacDonald: 28 days later

UFC 87 (8/9/08): lost to submission to Demian Maia

UFC 88 (9/6/08): won via submission over Jason Lambert

C.B. Dollaway: 28 days later

The Ultimate Fighter 7 Finale (6/21/08): lost to submission to Amir Sadollah

UFC Fight Night 14 (7/19/08): won via submission over Jesse Taylor

Krzysztof Soszynski: 35 days later

UFC 97 (4/18/09): won via submission over Brian Stann

UFC 98 (5/23/09): won via KO over Andre Gusmao

Xavier Foupa-Pokam: 35 days later

UFC 97 (4/18/09): lost via unanimous decision to Denis Kang

UFC 98 (5/23/09): lost via TKO to Drew McFedries

Rich Clementi: 35 days later

UFC 83 (4/19/08): won via decision over Sam Stout

UFC 84 (5/24/08): won via unanimous decision over Terry Etim

Dan Miller: 38 days later

UFC Fight Night 15 (9/17/08): won via submission over Rob Kimmons

UFC 90 (10/25/08): won via decision over Matt Horwich

Drew McFedries: 38 days later

UFC Fight Night 15 (9/17/08): lost via submission to Mike Massenzio

UFC 90 (10/25/08): lost via submission to Thales Leites

Brandon Vera: 42 days later

UFC 85 (6/7/08): lost via TKO to Fabricio Werdum

UFC Fight Night 14 (7/19/08): won via decision over Reese Andy

Kevin Burns: 42 days later

UFC 85 (6/7/08): won via submission over Roan Carneiro

UFC Fight Night 14 (7/19/08): won via TKO over Anthony Johnson

Jason Lambert: 42 days later

UFC 58 (3/4/06): won via submission over Rob MacDonald

UFC 59 (4/15/06): won via TKO over Terry Martin

Alessio Sakara: 42 days later

UFC 80 (1/19/08): won via TKO over James Lee

UFC 82 (3/1/08): lost via TKO to Chris Leben

Benji Radach: 43 days later

UFC 37 (5/10/02): no contest – overturned by State Commission vs. Steve Berger

UFC 37.5 (6/22/02): won via decision over Nick Serra

Robbie Lawler: 43 days later

UFC 37 (5/10/02): won via decision over Aaron Riley

UFC 37.5 (6/22/02): won via TKO over Steve Berger

Steve Berger: 43 days later

UFC 37 (5/10/02): no contest - overturned by State Commission vs. Benji Radach

UFC 37.5 (6/22/02): lost via TKO to Robbie Lawler

Yves Edwards: 43 days later

UFC 37 (5/10/02): lost via decision to Caol Uno

UFC 37.5 (6/22/02): won via TKO over Joao Marcos Pierini

Joe Riggs: 43 days later

UFC 55 (10/7/05): won via TKO over Chris Lytle

UFC 56 (11/19/05): lost via submission to Matt Hughes

MOST WINS / LOSSES / DRAWS**Wins**

Chuck Liddell: 16 wins

Matt Hughes: 16 wins

Tito Ortiz: 14 wins

Randy Couture: 13 wins

Georges St. Pierre: 13 wins

Rich Franklin: 12 wins

Losses

David Abbott: 10 losses

Chris Lytle: 9 losses

Jeremy Horn: 7 losses

Chuck Liddell, Tito Ortiz, Randy Couture, Evan Tanner, Ken Shamrock, Matt Serra, Elvis Sinosic: 6 losses

Draws

Ken Shamrock: 2

LONGEST STREAKS

Anderson Silva: 10 wins in a row

BEGIN: *Ultimate Fight Night 5* (6/28/06)

END: (ongoing) UFC 101 (8/8/2009)

Jon Fitch: 8 wins in a row

BEGIN: *Ultimate Fight Night 2* (10/3/05)

END: UFC 82 (3/1/08)

(lost at UFC 87)

Chuck Liddell: 7 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 22 (9/24/99)

END: UFC 40 (11/22/02)

(lost at UFC 43)

Chuck Liddell: 7 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 47 (4/2/04)

END: UFC 66 (12/30/06)

(lost at UFC 71)

Lyoto Machida: 7 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 67 (2/3/07)

END: (ongoing) UFC 98 (5/23/09)

Pat Miletich: 7 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 16 (3/13/98)

END: UFC 29 (12/16/00)

(lost at UFC 31)

Randy Couture: 7 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 13 (5/30/97)

END: UFC 34 (11/2/01)

(lost at UFC 36)

Rich Franklin: 7 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 42 (4/25/03)

END: UFC 58 (3/4/06)

(lost at UFC 64)

Royce Gracie: 8 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 1 (11/12/93)

END: UFC 3 (9/9/94)

(threw in the towel at UFC 3 finals – went on to win three more matches at UFC 4 and then fight to a draw at UFC 5)

Thiago Alves: 7 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC: The Final Chapter (10/10/06)

END: UFC 90 (10/25/08)

(lost at UFC 100)

Georges St. Pierre: 6 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC 74 (8/25/07)

END: UFC 100 (7/11/09)

Gray Maynard: 6 wins in a row

BEGIN: UFC Fight Night 11 (9/19/07)

END: UFC Fight Night 19 (9/16/09)

(Gray actually went to a no contest with Robert Emerson at *The Ultimate Fighter* 5 Finale so you could say his undefeated streak is at 7.)

Those who have won five in a row:

Anderson Silva, Andrei Arlovski, Chuck Liddell (twice), Chuck Liddell, Diego Sanchez, Don Frye, Georges St. Pierre, Jens Pulver, Jon Fitch, Kenny Florian, Lyoto Machida, Marcus Davis, Mark Coleman, Matt Hughes (twice), Pat Miletich, Randy Couture, Rich Franklin, Roger Huerta, Royce Gracie, Thiago Alves, Tito Ortiz, Yves Edwards

Elvis Sinosic: 6 losses in a row

BEGIN: UFC 32 (6/29/01)

END: UFC 70 (4/21/07)

(did debut with a win at UFC 30; hasn't appeared since UFC 70)

Those who have lost four in a row:

Chris Lytle, Dave Menne, David Abbott, Elvis Sinosic (obviously), Joe Doerksen, Mark Coleman, Patrick Côté, Pete Sell, Pete Williams, Phil Baroni, and Tiki Ghosn

FIGHTERS' FIVE FASTEST FIGHTS

Vitor Belfort: 4 minutes and 15 seconds

UFC 12: vs. Scott Ferrozzo, win via TKO, 0:43

UFC 17.5: Ultimate Brazil: vs. Wanderlei Silva, win via TKO, 0:44

UFC 46: vs. Randy Couture, win via TKO, 0:49

UFC 13: vs. David Abbott, win via TKO, 0:52

UFC 43: vs. Marvin Eastman, win via TKO, 1:07

Frank Mir: 4 min and 44 seconds

UFC 36: vs. Pete Williams, win via submission, 0:46

UFC 41: vs. David Abbott, win via submission, 0:46

UFC 48: vs. Tim Sylvia, win via arm bar, 0:50

UFC 34: vs. Roberto Traven, win via arm bar, 1:05

UFC 74: vs. Antoni Hardonk, win via Kimura, 1:17

Don Frye: 4 min and 52 seconds

UFC 8: vs. Thomas Ramirez, win via KO, 0:08

Ultimate Ultimate 1996: vs. Mark Hall, win via achilles hold, 0:20

UFC 8: vs. Sam Adkins, win via TKO, 0:48

Ultimate Ultimate 1996: vs. David Abbott, win via rear naked choke, 1:22

UFC 8: vs. Gary Goodridge, win via submission, 2:14

David Abbott: 5 min and 13 seconds

UFC 6: vs. John Matua, win via KO, 0:20

UFC 17: vs. Hugo Duarte, win via TKO, 0:43

Ultimate Ultimate 1996: vs. Steve Nelmark, win via KO, 1:03

Ultimate Ultimate: vs. Steve Jennum, win via submission, 1:14

UFC 6: vs. Paul Varelans, win via TKO, 1:53

Mike Swick: 5 min and 43 seconds

The Ultimate Fighter Finale: vs. Alex Schoenauer, win via KO, 0:20

Ultimate Fight Night: vs. Gideon Ray, win via TKO, 0:22

UFC: Fight for the Troops: vs. Jonathan Goulet, win via TKO, 0:33

UFC 58: vs. Steve Vigneault, win via guillotine choke, 2:08

UFC 60: vs. Joe Riggs, win via guillotine choke, 2:19

Royce Gracie: 6 min and 36 seconds

UFC 1: vs. Ken Shamrock, win via rear naked choke, 0:57

UFC 2: vs. Jason Delucia, win via arm lock, 1:07

UFC 2: vs. Patrick Smith, win via submission, 1:17

UFC 2: vs. Remco Pardoel, win via submission, 1:31

UFC 1: vs. Gerard Gordeau, win via rear naked choke, 1:44

Tito Ortiz: 6 min and 36 seconds

UFC 13: vs. Wes Albritton, win via TKO, 0:31

UFC 30: vs. Evan Tanner, win via KO, 0:32

UFC 61: vs. Ken Shamrock, win via TKO, 1:18

UFC 29: vs. Yuki Kondo, win via neck crank, 1:52

UFC: The Final Chapter: vs. Ken Shamrock, win via TKO, 2:23

Dan Severn: 8 min and 56 seconds

UFC 4: vs. Marcus Bossett, win via rear naked choke, 0:52

UFC 5: vs. Joe Charles, win via rear naked choke, 1:38

Ultimate Ultimate: vs. Paul Varelans, win via arm triangle choke, 1:40

UFC 4: vs. Anthony Macias, win via rear naked choke, 1:45

UFC 5: vs. Dave Beneteau, win via submission, 3:00

Andrei Arlovski: 9 min and 36 seconds

UFC 55: vs. Paul Buentello, win via KO, 0:15

UFC 51: vs. Tim Sylvia, win via achilles lock, 0:47

UFC 28: vs. Aaron Brink, win via arm bar, 0:55

UFC 40: vs. Ian Freeman, win via TKO, 1:25

UFC 44: vs. Vladimir Matyushenko, win via KO, 1:59

Ken Shamrock: 14 min and 27 seconds

UFC 48: vs. Kimo Leopoldo, win via KO, 1:26

UFC 1: vs. Patrick Smith, win via heel hook, 1:49

UFC 6: vs. Dan Severn, win via guillotine choke, 2:14

UFC 8: vs. Kimo Leopoldo, win via knee bar, 4:24

UFC 3: vs. Felix Mitchell, win via rear naked choke, 4:34

Chris Leben: 15 min and 36 seconds

The Ultimate Fighter Finale: vs. Jason Thacker, win via TKO, 1:35

Ultimate Fight Night 3: vs. Jorge Rivera, win via TKO, 1:44

UFC 82: vs. Alessio Sakara, win via TKO, 3:16

Ultimate Fight Night 2: vs. Edwin Dewees, win via arm bar, 3:26

UFC Fight Night 6: vs. Jorge Santiago, win via KO, 5:35

Evan Tanner: 16 min and 35 seconds

UFC 36: vs. Elvis Sinosic, win via TKO, 2:06

UFC 50: vs. Robbie Lawler, win via triangle choke, 2:22

UFC 19: vs. Valeri Ignatov, win via TKO, 2:58

UFC 59: vs. Justin Levens, win via triangle choke, 3:14

UFC 51: vs. David Terrell, win via TKO, 4:35

Chuck Liddell: 17 min and 4 seconds

UFC 31: vs. Kevin Randleman, win via KO, 1:18

UFC 62: vs. Renato Sobral, win via TKO, 1:35

UFC 52: vs. Randy Couture, win via KO, 2:06

UFC 40: vs. Renato Sobral, win via KO, 2:55

UFC 22: vs. Paul Jones, win via TKO, 3:53

Josh Koscheck: 18 min and 11 seconds

Ultimate Fight Night: vs. Pete Spratt, win via rear naked choke, 1:53

UFC Fight for the Troops: vs. Yoshiyuki Yoshida, win via KO, 2:15

Ultimate Fight Night 4: vs. Ansar Chalangov, win via rear naked choke, 3:29

UFC Fight Night 6: vs. Jonathan Goulet, win via submission, 4:10

The Ultimate Fighter Finale: vs. Chris Sanford, win via KO, 4:21

Tim Sylvia: 19 min and 28 seconds

UFC 44: vs. Gan McGee, win via TKO, 1:54

UFC 59: vs. Andrei Arlovski, win via TKO, 2:43

UFC 41: vs. Ricco Rodriguez, win via TKO, 3:08

UFC 54: vs. Tra Telligman, win via KO, 4:59

UFC 39: vs. Wesley Correia, win via corner stoppage, 6:43

There have been only five feuds which have had three matches in UFC:

Randy Couture/Vitor Belfort (UFC 15/46/49): Randy leads 2-1 (all TKOs)

Ken Shamrock/Tito Ortiz (UFC 40/61/Final Chapter): Tito leads 3-0 (all TKOs)

Georges St. Pierre/Matt Hughes (UFC 50/65/79): GSP leads 2-1 (submission/TKO/submission)

Chuck Liddell/Randy Couture (UFC 43/52/57): Chuck leads 2-1 (all KO/TKOs)

Andrei Arlovski/Tim Sylvia (UFC 51/59/61): Tim leads 2-1 (submission/TKO/decision)

Additionally, only 35 pairs have fought twice in UFC:

Aaron Riley vs. Shane Nelson (UFC 96 and 101): Tied 1-1

Anderson Silva vs. Rich Franklin (UFC 64 and 77): Anderson Silva leads 2-0

Anthony Johnson vs. Kevin Burns (UFC Fight Night 14 and *The Ultimate Fighter* 8 Finale): Tied 1-1

B.J. Penn vs. Caol Uno (UFC 34 and 41): B.J. Penn won the first match, draw in second

B.J. Penn vs. Georges St. Pierre (UFC 94 and 58): Georges St. Pierre leads 2-0

B.J. Penn vs. Jens Pulver (UFC 35 and *The Ultimate Fighter* 5 Finale): Tied 1-1

B.J. Penn vs. Matt Hughes (UFC 63 and 46): Tied 1-1

Brock Lesnar vs. Frank Mir (UFC 81 and 100): Tied 1-1

Carlos Newton vs. Matt Hughes (UFC 34 and 38): Matt Hughes leads 2-0

Chuck Liddell vs. Jeremy Horn (UFC 19 and 54): Tied 1-1

Chuck Liddell vs. Renato Sobral (UFC 40 and 62): Chuck Liddell leads 2-0

Chuck Liddell vs. Tito Ortiz (UFC 47 and 66): Chuck Liddell leads 2-0

Dan Severn vs. Ken Shamrock (UFC 9 and 6): Tied 1-1

Dan Severn vs. Oleg Taktarov (UFC 5 and Ultimate Ultimate 1): Dan Severn leads 2-0

Dave Beneteau vs. Oleg Taktarov (UFC 6 and Ultimate Ultimate 2): Oleg Taktarov leads 2-0

Don Frye vs. Gary Goodridge (Ultimate Ultimate 2 and UFC 8): Don Frye leads 2-0

Don Frye vs. Mark Hall (UFC 10 and Ultimate Ultimate 2): Don Frye leads 2-0

Evan Tanner vs. Phil Baroni (UFC 48 and 45): Evan Tanner leads 2-0

Evan Tanner vs. Rich Franklin (UFC 42 and 53): Rich Franklin leads 2-0

Fabiano Iha vs. LaVerne Clark (UFC 20 and 27): Tied 1-1

Falaniko Vitale vs. Matt Lindland (UFC 43 and 45): Tied 1-1

Forrest Griffin vs. Stephan Bonnar (*The Ultimate Fighter* 1 Finale and UFC 62): Forrest Griffin leads 2-0

Forrest Griffin vs. Tito Ortiz (UFC 59 and 106): Tied 1-1

Frank Mir vs. Wes Sims (UFC 46 and 43): Wes Sims was DQed in the first match, Frank won the second

Frank Trigg vs. Matt Hughes (UFC 52 and 45): Matt Hughes leads 2-0

Georges St. Pierre vs. Matt Serra (UFC 69 and 83): Tied 1-1

Guy Mezger vs. Tito Ortiz (UFC 19 and 13): Tied 1-1

Kazushi Sakuraba vs. Marcus Silveira (UFC 15.5 Ultimate Japan 1): Match was prematurely stopped at first, rematch was later on the card and Sakaruba won

Ken Shamrock vs. Kimo Leopoldo (UFC 8 and 48): Ken Shamrock leads 2-0

Ken Shamrock vs. Royce Gracie (UFC 1 and 5): Gracie submitted Ken in the first match, second match was a draw

Matt Lindland vs. Phil Baroni (UFC 34 and 41): Matt Lindland leads 2-0

Nate Quarry vs. Pete Sell (*Ultimate Fight Night* and *Fight Night* 11): Nate Quarry leads 2-0

Pedro Rizzo vs. Randy Couture (UFC 31 and 34): Randy Couture leads 2-0

Pedro Rizzo vs. Tra Telligman (UFC 43 and 20): Pedro Rizzo leads 2-0

Sam Stout vs. Spencer Fisher (UFC 58 and Fight Night 10): Tied 1-1

There have been 681 fighters in the UFC over the last 134 events.

That's 1,187 matches.

Of those 681 fighters:

249 fought once (37%)

144 fought twice (21%)

76 fought three times (11%)

43 fought four times (6%); includes Brock Lesnar

29 fought five times (4%); includes Frank Shamrock

24 fought six times (4%)

31 fought seven times (5%)

19 fought eight times (3%)

15 fought nine times (2%)

17 fought ten times (2%)

34 fought more than ten times (5%)

Those fighting more than ten times

8 fought 11 times (Forrest Griffin, Joe Stevenson, Jon Fitch, Marcus Davis, Mark Coleman, Sean Sherk, Spencer Fisher, Vitor Belfort)

7 fought 12 times (Chris Leben, Diego Sanchez, Karo Parisyan, Kenny Florian, Matt Lindland, Matt Serra, Thiago Alves)

3 fought 13 times (Dan Severn, Jeremy Horn, Tim Sylvia)

5 fought 14 times (Andrei Arlovski, Frank Mir, Josh Koscheck, Pedro Rizzo, Royce Gracie)

5 fought 15 times (B.J. Penn, Chris Lytle, Georges St. Pierre, Ken Shamrock, Rich Franklin)

1 person fought 17 times (Evan Tanner)

1 person fought 18 times (David Abbott)

1 person fought 19 times (Randy Couture)

2 people fought 21 times (Matt Hughes and Tito Ortiz)

1 person fought 22 times (Chuck Liddell)

At UFC 21, the five-round structure was installed

Heavyweight: 21 Championship Fights

Light Heavyweight: 18 Championship Fights

Middleweight: 17 Championship Fights

Welterweight: 18 Championship Fights

Lightweight: 11 Championship Fights

Bantamweight: 1 Championship Fight (UFC 30:

Jens Pulver/Caol Uno – quickly renamed

Lightweight)

Of the 86 five-round championship fights:

27% of championship fights ended in Round 1 (average fight 2:42)

20% of championship fights ended in Round 2 (average fight 7:42)

20% of championship fights ended in Round 3 (average fight 13:22)

8% of championship fights ended in Round 4 (average fight 18:45)

26% of championship fights ended in Round 5 (average fight 24:54); includes fights that went the distance

Fight Endings by Weight Division:

Round 1: 0 light, 6 welter, 6 middle, 5 light heavy, 6 heavy

Round 2: 4 light, 4 welter, 3 middle, 2 light heavy, 4 heavy

Round 3: 1 light, 3 welter, 3 middle, 6 light heavy, 4 heavy

Round 4: 1 light, 3 welter, 2 middle, 1 light heavy, 0 heavy

Round 5: 6 light, 2 welter, 3 middle, 4 light heavy, 7 heavy

Average Fight Length by Weight Division:

Lightweight: 99-04 avg = 19 min, 05-09 avg = 20 min

Welterweight: 01-04 avg = 8.5 min, 05-09 avg = 12 min

Middleweight: 99-04 avg = 12.5 min, 05-09 avg = 12.5 min

Light heavy: 01-04 avg = 14 min, 05-09 avg = 12 min

Heavyweight: 99-04 avg = 16 min, 05-09 avg = 10.5 min

Total: 99-04 avg = 13 min, 05-09 avg = 12.5 min

Eleven other championship fights prior to UFC 21:

UFC 12: Mark Coleman vs. Dan Severn, 2:57

(heavyweight title)

UFC 14: Maurice Smith vs. Mark Coleman, 21:00

(heavyweight title)

UFC 15: Maurice Smith vs. David Abbott, 8:08

(heavyweight title)

UFC 17.5 Ultimate Japan 1: Frank Shamrock vs. Kevin

Jackson, 0:16 (middleweight title)

UFC 17.5 Ultimate Japan 1: Randy Couture vs. Maurice

Smith, 21:00 (heavyweight title)

UFC 16: Frank Shamrock vs. Igor Zinoviev, 0:22

(middleweight title)

UFC 17: Frank Shamrock vs. Jeremy Horn, 16:28

(middleweight title)

UFC 17.5: Ultimate Brazil: Pat Miletich vs. Mikey

Burnett, 21:00 (lightweight title)

UFC 17.5: Ultimate Brazil: Frank Shamrock vs. John

Lober, 7:40 (middleweight title)

UFC 18: Pat Miletich vs. Jorge Patino, 21:00

(lightweight title)

UFC 20: Bas Rutten vs. Kevin Randleman, 21:00

(heavyweight title)

6 of 11 fights (55%) went less than 21 minutes prior to UFC 21. Since then, 65 of 86 fights have gone less than 21 minutes (76%). About 73% of all UFC fights have gone less than 21 minutes. Only one fight has ended after the 21-minute mark, prior to a decision: Ricco Rodriguez/Randy Couture at UFC 39 (submission).

Fights/Year

1994 to 2004 average of 40 UFC fights/year.
2005 was a big year where they doubled to 80 fights.
2006 doubled that again to 158 fights.
2007 had 171 fights.
2008 had 201 fights.
2009 had 215 fights.

2006 to 2009 averages by weight divisions

46 lightweight fights
47 welterweight fights
38 middleweight fights
33 light heavyweight fights
23 heavyweight fights

There is an average of 2 championship bouts per weight class each year.

Average fight lengths are remarkably similar in all of the weight categories (across 745 fights from 2006-2009)
Lightweight: 9:25 (drops to 8:59 without championship bouts)
Welterweight: 9:38 (drops to 9:27 without championship bouts)
Middleweight: 8:36 (drops to 8:27 without championship bouts)
Light Heavyweight: 8:49 (drops to 8:24 without championship bouts)
Heavyweight: 8:24 (drops to 7:47 without championship bouts)
Average: 9:04 (drops to 8:46 without championship bouts)

Appendix II

Other Major MMA Results

PRIDE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Pride 1

10/11/97

Tokyo Dome (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Rickson Gracie defeated Nobuhiko Takada (arm bar)

Other Fights:

Kimo Leopoldo vs. Dan Severn (draw)

Nathan Jones defeated Koji Katao (key lock)

Renzo Gracie vs. Akira Shoji (draw)

Gary Goodridge defeated Oleg Taktarov (KO)

Kazunari Murakami defeated John Dixon (arm bar)

Branko Cikatic vs. Ralph White (no contest, kickboxing rules)

Pride 2

3/15/98

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Mark Kerr defeated Branko Cikatic (DQ)

Other Fights:

Marco Ruas defeated Gary Goodridge (heel hook)

Renzo Gracie defeated Sanae Kikuta (guillotine choke)

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Vernon White (arm bar)

Akira Shoji defeated Juan Mott (rear naked choke)

Royler Gracie defeated Yuhi Sano (arm bar)

William Roosmalen defeated Ralph White (KO, kickboxing rules)

Tasis Petridis defeated George Randolph (decision, kickboxing rules)

Pride 3

6/24/98

Nippon Budokan (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Nobuhiko Takada defeated Kyle Sturgeon (heel hook)

Other Fights:

Mark Kerr defeated Pedro Otavio (Kimura)

Gary Goodridge defeated Amir Rahnvardi (KO)

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Carlos Newton (knee bar)

Daiju Takase defeated Emmanuel Yarborough (submission to strikes)

Dijiro Matsui vs. Akira Shoji (draw)

Pride 4

10/11/98

Tokyo Dome (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Rickson Gracie defeated Nobuhiko Takada (arm bar)

Other Fights:

Mark Kerr defeated Hugo Duarte (TKO)

Alexander Otsuka defeated Marco Ruas (TKO)

Satoshi Honma defeated Yuhi Sano (TKO)

Kazushi Sakuraba vs. Allan Goes (draw)

Sanae Kikuta vs. Daijiro Matsui (draw)

Akira Shoji defeated Wallid Ismail (TKO)

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Gary Goodridge (TKO)

Pride 5

4/29/99

Nagoya Rainbow Hall (Nagoya, Japan)

Main Event: Nobuhiko Takada defeated Mark Coleman (heel hook)

Other Fights:

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Vitor Belfort (decision)

Enson Inoue defeated Soichi Nishida (rear naked choke)

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Akira Shoji (decision)

Francisco Bueno defeated Satoshi Honma (TKO)
Egan Inoue defeated Minoru Toyonaga (TKO)

Pride 6

7/4/99

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Mark Kerr defeated Nobuhiko Takada (Kimura)

Other Fights:

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Ebenezer Fontes Braga (arm bar)
Naoya Ogawa defeated Gary Goodridge (Americana)
Akira Shoji defeated Guy Mezger (decision)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Carlos Barreto (decision)
Carlos Newton defeated Daijiro Matsui (decision)
Carl Malenko defeated Egan Inoue (decision)

Pride 7

9/12/99

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Mark Kerr vs. Igor Vovchanchyn (no contest)

Other Fights:

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Anthony Macias (arm bar)
Akira Shoji defeated Larry Parker (decision)
Maurice Smith defeated Branko Cikatic (forearm choke)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Carl Malenko (decision)
Daijiro Matsui defeated Bob Schrijber (DQ)
Enson Inoue defeated Tully Kulihaapai (arm bar, grappling rules)
Nobuhiko Takada defeated Alexander Otsuka (TKO, professional wrestling exhibition)

Pride 8

11/21/99

Ariake Coliseum (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Royler Gracie (Kimura)

Other Fights:

Renzo Gracie defeated Alexander Otsuka (decision)

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Francisco Bueno (KO)
Tom Erikson defeated Gary Goodridge (decision)
Mark Coleman defeated Ricardo Morais (decision)
Allen Goes defeated Carl Malenko (arm triangle)
Frank Trigg defeated Fabiano Iha (TKO)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Daijiro Matsui (decision)

Pride Grand Prix 2000 Opening Round

1/30/00

Tokyo Dome (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Royce Gracie defeated Nobuhiko Takada (decision)

Other Fights:

Mark Kerr defeated Enson Inoue (decision)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Alexander Otsuka (decision)
Mark Coleman defeated Masaaki Satake (neck crank)
Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Guy Mezger (forfeit)
Kazuyuki Fujita defeated Hans Nijman (decision)
Akira Shoji defeated Ebenezer Fontes Braga (decision)
Gary Goodridge defeated Osamu Tachihikari (forearm choke)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Bob Schrijber (rear naked choke)

Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals

5/1/00

Tokyo Dome (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Mark Coleman defeated Igor Vovchanchyn (submission to knee strikes, won Pride Grand Prix Championship)

Other Fights:

Ken Shamrock defeated Alexander Otsuka (TKO)
Mark Coleman defeated Kazuyuki Fujita (corner stoppage)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (corner stoppage)
Guy Mezger defeated Masaaki Satake (decision)
Kazuyuki Fujita defeated Mark Kerr (decision)
Mark Coleman defeated Akira Shoji (decision)
Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Royce Gracie (corner stoppage)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Gary Goodridge (TKO)

Pride 9

6/4/00

Nagoya Rainbow Hall (Nagoya, Japan)

Main Event: Vitor Belfort defeated Gilbert Yvel (decision)

Other Fights:

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Daijiro Matsui (TKO)
Ricco Rodriguez defeated Gary Goodridge (decision)
Akira Shoji defeated John Renken (arm bar)
Carlos Newton defeated Yuhi Sano (arm bar)
Allan Goes defeated Vernon White (decision)
Carlos Barreto defeated Tra Telligman (decision)
Heath Herring defeated Willie Peeters (rear naked choke)

Pride 10

8/27/00

Seibu Dome (Tokorozawa, Japan)

Main Event: Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Renzo Gracie (Kimura)

Other Fights:

Ryan Gracie defeated Tokimitsu Ishizawa (TKO)
Kazuyuki Fujita defeated Ken Shamrock (corner stoppage)
Masaaki Satake defeated Kazunari Murakami (TKO)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Enson Inoue (TKO)
Mark Kerr defeated Igor Borisov (neck crank)
Gilbert Yvel defeated Gary Goodridge (KO)
Ricco Rodriguez defeated Takayuki Okada (north-south choke)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Guy Mezger (KO)
Vitor Belfor defeated Daijiro Matsui (decision)

Pride 11

11/31/00

Osaka Castle Hall (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Shannon Ritch (Achilles lock)

Other Fights:

Naoya Ogawa defeated Masaaki Satake (rear naked choke)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Nobuhiko Takada (submission to strikes)
Akira Shoji defeated Herman Renting (arm bar)

Alexander Otsuka defeated Mike Bourne (arm bar)

Gary Goodridge defeated Yoshiaki Yatsu (TKO)

Wanderlei Silva vs. Gilbert Yvel (no contest)

Heath Herring defeated Tom Erikson (rear naked choke)

Pride 12

12/9/00

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Ryan Gracie (decision)

Other Fights:

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Mark Kerr (decision)
Kazuyuki Fujita defeated Gilbert Yvel (decision)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Dan Handerson (decision)
Heath Herring defeated Enson Inoue (TKO)
Ricardo Almeida defeated Akira Shoji (decision)
Ricco Rodriguez defeated John Marsh (decision)
Carlos Newton defeated Johil de Oliveira (decision)
Guy Mezger defeated Alexander Otsuka (TKO)

Pride 13

3/25/01

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (TKO)

Other Fights:

Tra Telligman defeated Igor Vovchanchyn (decision)
Tadao Yasuda defeated Masaaki Satake (decision)
Mark Coleman defeated Allan Goes (TKO)
Dan Henderson defeated Renzo Gracie (KO)
Heath Herring defeated Denis Sobolev (key lock)
Guy Mezger defeated Egan Inoue (KO)
Vitor Belfort defeated Bobby Southworth (rear naked choke)

Pride 14

5/27/01

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Kazuyuki Fujita defeated Yoshihiro Takayama (arm triangle)

Other Fights:

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Gilbert Yvel (rear naked choke)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Shungo Oyama (TKO)
Dan Henderson defeated Akira Shoji (TKO)
Vitor Belfort defeated Heath Herring (decision)
Gary Goodridge defeated Valentijn Overeem (submission to strikes)
Chuck Liddell defeated Guy Mezger (KO)
Daijiro Matsui defeated Jose Landi-Jons (decision)
Nino Schembri defeated Johil de Oliveira (arm bar)

Pride 15

7/29/01

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Tokimitsu Ishizawa defeated Ryan Gracie (TKO)

Other Fights:

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Quinton Jackson (rear naked choke)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Gary Goodridge (triangle choke)
Heath Herring defeated Mark Kerr (TKO)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Masaaki Satake (decision)
Daijiro Matsui defeated Ebenezer Fontes Braga (decision)
Wallid Ismail defeated Shungo Oyama (arm triangle)
Assuerio Silva defeated Valentijn Overeem (heel hook)

Pride 16

9/24/01

Osaka Castle Hall (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Mark Coleman (triangle arm bar)

Other Fights:

Don Frye defeated Gilbert Yvel (DQ)
Semmy Schilt defeated Akira Shoji (KO)
Ricardo Arona defeated Guy Mezger (decision)
Murilo Rua defeated Daijiro Matsui (KO)
Assuerio Silva defeated Yoshihisa Yamamoto (KO)
Gary Goodridge defeated Yoshiaki Yatsu (TKO)

Pride 17

11/3/01

Tokyo Dome (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (doctor stoppage, won Pride Middleweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Heath Herring (decision, won Pride Heavyweight Championship)
Mirko Cro Cop vs. Nobuhiko Takada (draw)
Tom Erikson defeated Matt Skelton (front choke)
Mario Sperry defeated Igor Vovchanchyn (arm triangle)
Semmy Schilt defeated Masaaki Satake (TKO)
Dan Henderson defeated Murilo Rua (decision)
Quinton Jackson defeated Yuki Ishikawa (KO)
Renzo Gracie defeated Michiyoshi Ohara (decision)

Pride 18

12/23/01

Marine Messe Fukuoka (Fukuoka, Japan)

Main Event: Semmy Schilt defeated Yoshihiro Takayama (KO)

Other Fights:

Wanderlei Silva defeated Alexander Otsuka (doctor stoppage)
Jeremy Horn defeated Akira Shoji (decision)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Valentijn Overeem (heel hook)
Yoshihisa Yamamoto defeated Jan Nortje (arm bar)
Murilo Rua defeated Alex Andrade (decision)
Alex Stiebling defeated Allan Goes (TKO)
Daijiro Matsui defeated Quinton Jackson (DQ)

Pride 19

2/24/02

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Kiyoshi Tamura (KO)

Other Fights:

Don Frye defeated Ken Shamrock (decision)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Enson Inoue (triangle choke)

Heath Herring defeated Igor Vovchanchyn
(decision)
Carlos Newton defeated Jose Landi-Jons (arm bar)
Rodrigo Gracie defeated Daijiro Matsui
(guillotine choke)
Alex Stiebling defeated Wallid Ismail (decision)
Tom Erikson defeated Tim Catalfo (rear naked
choke)

Pride 20

4/28/02

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop vs. Wanderlei Silva (draw)

Other Fights:

Sanae Kikuta defeated Alexander Otsuka
(decision)
Murilo Rua defeated Mario Sperry (decision)
Ricardo Arona defeated Dan Henderson
(decision)
Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Yusuke
Imamura (guillotine choke)
Quinton Jackson defeated Masaaki Satake (TKO)
Bob Sapp defeated Yoshihisa Yamamoto (TKO)

Pride 21

6/23/02

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Don Frye defeated Yoshihiro Takayama
(TKO)

Other Fights:

Fedor Emelianenko defeated Semmy Schilt
(decision)
Daniel Gracie defeated Takashi Sugiura (decision)
Shungo Oyama defeated Renzo Gracie (decision)
Jeremy Horn defeated Gilbert Yvel (decision)
Anderson Silva defeated Alex Stiebling (TKO)
Gary Goodridge defeated Achmed Labasanov
(decision)
Bob Sapp defeated Kiyoshi Tamura (TKO)

Pride Shockwave 2002

8/28/02

Tokyo National Stadium (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop defeated Kazushi Sakuraba
(doctor stoppage)

Other Fights:

Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Royce Gracie (Ezekiel
choke, modified rules)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Bob Sapp (arm
bar)
Jerome Le Banner defeated Don Frye (KO, K-1
kickboxing rules)
Ernesto Hoost vs. Semmy Schilt (draw, K-1
kickboxing rules)
Gary Goodridge defeated Lloyd Van Dams (TKO)
Jerrold Venetiaan defeated Daijiro Matsui
(decision)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Tatsuya Iwasaki (TKO)

Pride 22

9/29/02

Nagoya Rainbow Hall (Nagoya, Japan)

Main Event: Ryan Gracie defeated Shungo Oyama (arm
bar)

Other Fights:

Quinton Jackson defeated Igor Vovchanchyn
(TKO)
Mario Sperry defeated Andrei Kopylov (TKO)
Heath Herring defeated Iouri Kutchkine (TKO)
Paulo Filho defeated Akira Shoji (arm bar)
Anderson Silva defeated Alexander Otsuka
(decision)
Guy Mezger defeated Yoshihisa Yamamoto
(decision)
Kevin Randleman defeated Michiyoshi Ohara
(decision)

Pride 23

11/24/02

Tokyo Dome (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Hiromitsu
Kanehara (corner stoppage)

Other Fights:

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Gilles Arsene (arm bar)
Kiyoshi Tamura defeated Nobuhiko Takada (KO)
Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Don Frye (arm bar)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Semmy Schilt
(triangle choke)
Fedor Emelianenko defeated Heath Herring
(doctor stoppage)

Ricardo Arona defeated Murilo Rua (decision)
Kevin Randleman defeated Kenichi Yamamoto (TKO)
Hirotaka Yokoi defeated Jerrel Venetiaan (arm bar)

Pride 24

12/23/02

Marine Messe Fukuoka (Fukuoka, Japan)

Main Event: Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Dan Henderson (arm bar)

Other Fights:

Kevin Randleman defeated Murilo Rua (TKO)
Alistair Overeem defeated Bazigit Atajev (TKO)
Yoshihisa Yamamoto defeated Alexander Otsuka (TKO)
Rodrigo Gracie defeated Yuki Sasaki (decision)
Ron Waterman defeated Valentijn Overeem (Americana)
Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Guy Mezger (decision)
Daijiro Matsui defeated Kazuki Okubo (decision)

Pride 25

3/16/03

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (decision, won Pride Heavyweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Quinton Jackson defeated Kevin Randleman (TKO)
Antonio Schembri defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (TKO)
Dan Henderson defeated Shungo Oyama (TKO)
Anderson Silva defeated Carlos Newton (KO)
Alexander Otsuka defeated Kenichi Yamamoto (decision)
Akira Shoji defeated Alex Stiebling (decision)
Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (arm bar)

Pride 26

6/8/03

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Kazuyuki Fujita (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Mirko Cro Cop defeated Heath Herring (TKO)
Mark Coleman defeated Don Frye (decision)
Quinton Jackson defeated Mikhail Illoukhine (submission to knee strikes)
Alistair Overeem defeated Mike Bencic (submission to strikes)
Daiju Takase defeated Anderson Silva (triangle choke)
Kazuhiro Hamanaka defeated Antonio Schembri (decision)

Pride Total Elimination 2003

8/10/03

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (KO)

Other Fights:

Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Kiyoshi Tamura (Ezekiel choke)
Mirko Cro Cop defeated Igor Vovchanchyn (KO)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Ricco Rodríguez (decision)
Quinton Jackson defeated Murilo Bustamante (decision)
Chuck Liddell defeated Alistair Overeem (KO)
Fedor Emelianenko defeated Gary Goodridge (TKO)

Pride Bushido 1

10/05/03

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop defeated Dos Caras Jr. (KO)

Other Fights:

Aleksander Emelianenko defeated Assuerio Silva (decision)
Mauricio Rua defeated Akira Shoji (KO)
Ryan Gracie defeated Kazuhiro Hamanaka (TKO)
Rodrigo Gracie defeated Daiju Takase (decision)
Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Daniel Gracie (decision)
Ralph Gracie defeated Dokonjonosuke Mishima (decision)

Carlos Newton defeated Renzo Gracie (decision)
Sergei Kharitonov defeated Jason Suttie (arm bar)
Chalid Arrab defeated Rodney Faverus (decision)

Pride Final Conflict 2003

11/9/03

Tokyo Dome (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Quinton Jackson (TKO, won Pride Middleweight Grand Prix)

Other Fights:

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Mirko Cro Cop (arm bar)
Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Kevin Randleman (arm bar)
Heath Herring defeated Yoshihisa Yamamoto (rear naked choke)
Dan Henderson defeated Murilo Bustamante (TKO)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Hidehiko Yoshida (decision)
Quinton Jackson defeated Chuck Liddell (TKO)
Gary Goodridge defeated Dan Bobish (TKO)

Pride Shockwave 2003

12/31/03

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (decision)

Other Fights:

Kiyoshi Tamura defeated Rony Sefo (arm bar)
Yuki Kondo defeated Mario Sperry (doctor stoppage)
Daniel Gracie defeated Wataru Sakata (arm bar)
Gary Goodridge defeated Don Frye (KO)
Royce Gracie vs. Hidehiko Yoshida (draw)
Murilo Rua defeated Akira Shoji (KO)
Hayato Sakurai defeated Daiju Takase (decision)
Heath Herring defeated Giant Silva (rear naked choke)
Quinton Jackson defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (TKO)

Pride 27

2/1/04

Osaka Castle Hall (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop defeated Ron Waterman (TKO)

Other Fights:

Heath Herring defeated Gan McGee (decision)
Yoshihisa Yamamoto defeated Mark Kerr (TKO)
Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Dos Caras Jr. (decision)
Murilo Rua defeated Alexander Otsuka (arm triangle)
Sergei Kharitonov defeated Cory Peterson (arm bar)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Dan Bobish (TKO)

Pride Bushido 2

2/15/04

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (KO)

Other Fights:

Mauricio Rua defeated Akihiro Gono (TKO)
Takanori Gomi defeated Jadson Costa (TKO)
Mirko Cro Cop defeated Yoshihisa Yamamoto (TKO)
Rodrigo Gracie defeated Hayato Sakurai (decision)
Daiju Takase defeated Chris Brennan (decision)
Mario Sperry defeated Mike Bencic (KO)
Sean Sherk defeated Ryuki Ueyama (decision)
Yasuhito Namekawa defeated Egidijus Valavicius (guillotine)
Yushin Okami defeated Ryuta Sakurai (decision)
Mu Bae Choi defeated Yusuke Imamura (rear naked choke)

Pride Total Elimination 2004

4/25/04

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Mark Coleman (arm bar)

Other Fights:

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Hirotaka Yokoi (anaconda choke)
Kevin Randleman defeated Mirko Cro Cop (KO)
Naoya Ogawa defeated Stefan Leko (arm triangle)
Semmy Schilt defeated Gan McGee (arm bar)
Giant Silva defeated Henry Miller (Kimura)
Sergei Kharitonov defeated Murilo Rua (KO)

Heath Herring defeated Yoshiki Takahasi (TKO)

Pride Bushido 3

5/23/04

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Ryan Gracie defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (decision)

Other Fights:

Takanori Gomi defeated Ralph Gracie (TKO)

Ricardo Almeida defeated Ryo Chonan (decision)

Mirko Cro Cop defeated Hiromitsu Kanehara (decision)

Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Chalid Arrab (arm bar)

Akira Shoji defeated Tsuyoshi Takamairiki (TKO)

Daiju Takase defeated Carlos Newton (decision)

Kazuo Misaki defeated Jorge Patino (decision)

Mu Bae Choi defeated Yoshihisa Yamamoto (decision)

Aleksander Emelianenko defeated Matt Foki (rear naked choke)

Shamaji Fujii defeated Kim Jin Oh (rear naked choke)

Bertrand Amoussou defeated Rao Rao (KO)

Pride Critical Countdown 2004

6/20/04

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Kevin Randleman (Kimura)

Other Fights:

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Heath Herring (anaconda choke)

Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Mark Hunt (arm bar)

Naoya Ogawa defeated Giant Silva (TKO)

Sergei Kharitonov defeated Semmy Schilt (TKO)

Quinton Jackson defeated Ricardo Arona (KO)

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Antonio Schembri (decision)

Pride Bushido 4

7/19/04

Nagoya Rainbow Hall (Nagoya, Japan)

Main Event: Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (decision)

Other Fights:

Takanori Gomi defeated Fabio Mello (TKO)

Paulo Filho defeated Akira Shoji (decision)

Mirko Cro Cop defeated Shungo Oyama (TKO)

Takashi Sugiura defeated Giant Silva (TKO)

Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Kenichi Yamamoto (TKO)

Hayato Sakurai defeated Brady Fink (guillotine choke)

Amar Suloev defeated Dean Lister (decision)

Dokojonosuke Mishima defeated Marcus Aurelio (decision)

Luiz Firmino defeated Hiroyuki Abe (arm triangle)

Kyosuke Sasaki vs. Eiji Mitsuoka (draw)

Pride Final Conflict 2004

8/15/04

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko vs. Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (no contest)

Other Fights:

Wanderlei Silva defeated Yuki Kondo (KO)

Mirko Cro Cop defeated Aleksander Emelianenko (KO)

Ron Waterman defeated Kevin Randleman (key lock)

Fedor Emelianenko defeated Naoya Ogawa (arm bar)

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Sergei Kharitonov (decision)

Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Murilo Bustamante (decision)

Pride Bushido 5

10/14/04

Osaka Castle Hall (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Takanori Gomi defeated Charles Bennett (Kimura)

Other Fights:

Crosley Gracie defeated Hayato Sakurai (arm bar)

Ryo Chonan defeated Carlos Newton (decision)

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Shamaji Fujii (KO)

Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Ryuki Ueyama (decision)

Luiz Firmino defeated Masakazu Imanari (decision)

Henry Miller defeated Mal Foki (KO)

Mauricio Rua defeated Yasuhito Namekawa (TKO)

Pride 28

10/31/04

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Quinton Jackson (KO)

Other Fights:

Mirko Cro Cop defeated Josh Barnett (TKO)

Dan Henderson defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (TKO)

Mark Hunt defeated Dan Bobish (TKO)

Alistair Overeem defeated Hiromitsu Kanehara (TKO)

Aleksander Emelianenko defeated James Thompson (KO)

Ricardo Arona defeated Sergey Ignatov (rear naked choke)

Mu Bae Choi defeated Soa Palalei (rear naked choke)

Heath Herring defeated Hirotaka Yokoi (KO)

Pride Shockwave 2004

12/31/04

Saitama Super Arena, (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira (decision, won Pride Heavyweight Grand Prix)

Other Fights:

Mark Hunt defeated Wanderlei Silva (decision)

Takanori Gomi defeated Jens Pulver (KO)

Dan Henderson defeated Yuki Kondo (decision)

Mirko Cro Cop defeated Kevin Randleman (guillotine choke)

Rulan Gardner defeated Hidehiko Yoshida (decision)

Makoto Takimoto defeated Henry Miller (decision)

Ryo Chonan defeated Anderson Silva (heel hook)

Ryan Gracie defeated Yoji Anjo (arm bar)

Mu Bae Choi defeated Giant Silva (arm triangle)

Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Stefan Leko (heel hook)

Pride 29

2/20/05

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop defeated Mark Coleman (KO)

Other Fights:

Quinton Jackson defeated Murilo Rua (decision)

Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Alistair Overeem (decision)

Kiyoshi Tamura defeated Aliiev Makhmud (TKO)

Sergei Kharitonov defeated Mu Bae Choi (KO)

Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Stefan Leko (TKO)

Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Yoshiki Takahashi (KO)

Mauricio Rua defeated Hiromitsu Kanehara (TKO)

Fabricio Werdum defeated Tom Erikson (rear naked choke)

Mario Sperry defeated Hirotaka Yokoi (TKO)

Pride Bushido 6

4/3/05

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Tsuyoshi Koshaka (TKO)

Other Fights:

Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Gilbert Yvel (toe hold)

Murilo Bustamante defeated Ruta Sakurai (decision)

Aleksander Emelianenko defeated Ricardo Morais (KO)

Daniel Acacio defeated Daiju Takase (TKO)

Luiz Azeredo defeated Luiz Firmino (decision)

Marcus Aurelio defeated Daisuke Nakamura (decision)

Dean Lister defeated Akira Shoji (triangle choke)

Paulo Filho defeated Amar Suloev (arm bar)

Denis Kang defeated Takahiro Oba (arm bar)

Pride Total Elimination 2005

4/23/05

Osaka Dome (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Hidehiko Yoshida (decision)

Other Fights:

Murilo Rua defeated Quinton Jackson (KO)

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Yoon Dong-Sik (KO)

Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Dan Henderson (arm bar)
Alistair Overeem defeated Vitor Belfort (guillotine choke)
Igor Vovchanchyn defeated Yuki Kondo (decision)
Ricardo Arona defeated Dean Lister (decision)
Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Kevin Randleman (decision)

Pride Bushido 7

5/22/05

Differ Ariake (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Takanori Gomi defeated Luiz Azeredo (KO)

Other Fights:

Phil Baroni defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (TKO)
Ryo Chonan defeated Antonio Schembri (decision)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Kim In Seok (corner stoppage)
Akihiro Gono defeated Crosley Gracie (decision)
Hayato Sakurai defeated Milton Vieira (decision)
Aaron Riley defeated Michihiro Omigawa (KO)
Yves Edwards defeated Dokonjonosuke Mishima (arm bar)
Jens Pulver defeated Tomomi Iwama (KO)
Charles Bennett defeated Yoshiro Maeda (KO)

Pride Critical Countdown 2005

6/26/05

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Wanderlei Silva defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (TKO)

Other Fights:

Ricardo Arona defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (corner stoppage)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Pawel Nastula (TKO)
Kiyoshi Tamura defeated Makato Takimoto (decision)
Mirko Cro Cop defeated Ibragim Magomedov (KO)
Alistair Overeem defeated Igor Vovchanchyn (guillotine choke)
Mauricio Rua defeated Antonio Rogerio Nogueira (decision)
Sergei Kharitonov defeated Pedro Rizzo (TKO)

Pride Bushido 8

6/17/05

Nagoya Rainbow Hall (Nagoya, Japan)

Main Event: Takanori Gomi defeated Jean Silva (decision)

Other Fights:

Phil Baroni defeated Ryo Chonan (KO)
Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Kimo Leopoldo (Achilles lock)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Luiz Firmino (decision)
Daniel Acacio defeated Kazuo Misaki (decision)
Joachim Hansen defeated Masakazu Imanari (KO)
James Thompson defeated Henry Miller (KO)
Kazuki Okubo defeated Kazuki Okubo (arm bar)
Marcus Aurelio defeated Jutaro Nakao (decision)
Denis Kang defeated Andrei Semenov (decision)
Josh Thomson defeated Daisuke Sugie (knee bar)

Pride Final Conflict 2005

8/28/05

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mauricio Rua defeated Ricardo Arona (KO, won Pride Middleweight Grand Prix)

Other Fights:

Fedor Emelianenko defeated Mirko Cro Cop (decision)
Hidehiko Yoshida defeated David Abbott (kata ha jime)
Fabricio Wedrum defeated Roman Zentsov (triangle arm bar)
Mauricio Rua defeated Alistair Overeem (TKO)
Ricardo Arona defeated Wanderlei Silva (decision)
Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Igor Vovchanchyn (decision)

Pride Bushido 9

9/25/05

Ariake Coliseum (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Takanori Gomi defeated Luiz Azeredo (decision)

Other Fights:

Hayato Sakurai defeated Joachim Hansen (decision)
Murilo Bustamante defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (TKO)
Dan Henderson defeated Akihiro Gono (KO)

Luiz Azeredo defeated Naoyuki Kotani (KO)
 Takanori Gomi defeated Tatsuya Kawajiri (rear
 naked choke)
 Joachim Hansen defeated Yves Edwards
 (decision)
 Hayato Sakurai defeated Jens Pulver (TKO)
 Dokonjonosuke Mishima defeated Charles Bennett
 (ankle lock)
 Murilo Bustamante defeated Masanori Suda (arm
 bar)
 Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Phil Baroni (decision)
 Dan Henderson defeated Ryo Chonan (KO)
 Akihiro Gono defeated Daniel Acacio (decision)
 Paulo Filho defeated Ryuta Sakurai (arm bar)

Pride 30

10/23/05

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop defeated Josh Barnett
 (decision)

Other Fights:

Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Ken Shamrock (TKO)
 Makato Takimoto defeated Yoon Dong Sik
 (decision)
 Sergei Kharitonov defeated Fabricio Werdum
 (decision)
 Quinton Jackson defeated Hirotaka Yokoi (TKO)
 James Thompson defeated Alexander Lungru
 (TKO)
 Murilo Rua defeated Murad Chunkaiev (heel
 hook)
 Zuluzinho defeated Henry Miller (TKO)

Pride Shockwave 2005

12/31/05

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Naoya Ogawa
 (arm bar)

Other Fights:

Wanderlei Silva defeated Ricardo Arona (decision)
 Mark Hunt defeated Mirko Cro Cop (decision)
 Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Ikuhisa Minowa
 (Kimura)
 Takanori Gomi defeated Hayato Sakurai (KO, won
 Pride Lightweight Championship)

Dan Henderson defeated Murilo Bustamante
 (decision, won Pride Welterweight
 Championship)
 Fedor Emelianenko defeated Zuluzinho
 (submission to strikes)
 Aleksander Emelianenko defeated Pawel Nastula
 (rear naked choke)
 Sanae Kikuta defeated Makoto Takimoto
 (decision)
 James Thompson defeated Giant Silva (TKO)
 Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Yuki Kondo
 (decision)
 Charles Bennett defeats Ken Kaneko (arm bar)

Pride 31

2/26/06

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mark Hunt defeated Yosuke Nishijima (KO)

Other Fights:

Mark Coleman defeated Mauricio Rua (TKO)
 Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Kiyoshi
 Tamura (arm bar)
 Josh Barnett defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (rear
 naked choke)
 Alistair Overeem defeated Sergei Kharitonov (TKO)
 Tsuyoshi Kohsaka defeated Mario Sperry (TKO)
 Fabricio Werdum defeated Jon Olav Einemo
 (decision)
 Quinton Jackson defeated Yoon Dong Sik (decision)
 Roman Zentsov defeated Pedro Rizzo (KO)

Pride Bushido 10

4/2/06

Differ Ariake (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Marcus Aurelio defeated Takanori Gomi
 (arm triangle)

Other Fights:

Dan Henderson defeated Kazuo Misaki (decision)
 Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Giant Silva (TKO)
 Phil Baroni defeated Yuki Kondo (KO)
 Akihiro Gono defeated Dae Won Kim (arm bar)
 Paulo Filho defeated Murilo Rua (decision)
 Joachim Hansen defeated Luiz Azeredo (KO)
 Denis Kang defeated Mark Weir (submission to
 knee strikes)

Jens Pulver defeated Kenji Arai (KO)
Mitsuhiro Ishida defeated Paul Rodriguez
(guillotine choke)
Yves Edwards defeats Seichi Ikemoto (decision)

Pride Total Elimination Absolute

5/5/06

Osaka Dome (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Yosuke Nishijima (triangle choke)

Other Fights:

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Zuluzinho
(arm bar)
Mirko Filipovic defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (TKO)
Kazuyuki Fujita defeated James Thompson (KO)
Josh Barnett defeated Aleksander Emelianenko
(key lock)
Mark Hunt defeated Tsuyoshi Kohsaka (TKO)
Fabricio Werdum defeated Alistair Overeem (KO)
Roman Zentsov defeated Gilbert Yvel (Kimura)

Pride Bushido 11

6/4/06

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Kazuo Misaki defeated Phil Baroni
(decision)

Other Fights:

Denis Kang defeated Murilo Rua (KO)
Akihiro Gono defeated Hector Lombard (decision)
Hayato Sakurai defeated Olaf Alfonso (KO)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Charles Bennett (knee
bar)
Mitsuhiro Ishida defeated Marcus Aurelio
(decision)
Gegard Mousasi defeated Makoto Takimoto (TKO)
Ryo Chonan defeated Joey Villaseñor (decision)
Paulo Filho defeated Gregory Bouchelaghem
(decision)
Amar Suloev defeated Murilo Bustamante
(decision)
Jason Black defeated Won Jin Eoh (corner
stoppage)

Pride Critical Countdown Absolute

7/1/06

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop defeated Hidehiko Yoshida
(TKO)

Other Fights:

Josh Barnett defeated Mark Hunt (Kimura)
Wanderlei Silva defeated Kazuyuki Fujita (TKO)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Fabricio
Werdum (decision)
Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Evangelisa Santos
(key lock)
Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Alistair
Overeem (TKO)
Vitor Belfort defeated Kazuo Takahashi (KO)
Yoshihiro Nakao defeated Eun Soo Lee (doctor
stoppage)
Pawel Nastula defeated Edson Draggo (arm bar)

Pride Bushido 12

8/26/06

Nagoya Rainbow Hall (Nagoya, Japan)

Main Event: Takanori Gomi defeated David Baron (rear
naked choke)

Other Fights:

Kazuo Misaki defeated Dan Henderson (decision)
Akihiro Gono defeated Gegard Mousasi (arm bar)
Paulo Filho defeated Ryo Chonan (arm bar)
Denis Kang defeated Amar Suloev (rear naked
choke)
Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Eric Esch (arm bar)
Hayato Sakurai defeated Luciano Azevedo (TKO)
Mitsuhiro Ishida defeated Christiano Marcello
(decision)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Chris Brennan (TKO)
Gilbert Melendez defeated Nobuhiro Obiya
(decision)
Shinya Aoki defeated Jason Black (triangle
choke)
Hatsu Hioki defeated Jeff Curran (decision)
Hiroyuki Abe defeated Naoki Matsushita (draw)
Daisuke Nakamura defeated Seichi Ikemoto (arm
bar)

Pride Final Conflict Absolute

9/10/06

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mirko Cro Cop defeated Josh Barnett
(submission to strikes, won Pride Absolute Grand Prix)

Other Fights:

Ricardo Arona defeated Alistair Overeem
(submission to strikes)

Mauricio Rua defeated Cyrille Diabate (TKO)

Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Yoshihiro Nakao
(decision)

Ricardo Morais defeated Tae Hyun Lee (corner
stoppage)

Aleksander Emelianenko defeated Sergei
Kharitonov (TKO)

Josh Barnett defeated Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira
(decision)

Mirko Cro Cop defeated Wanderlei Silva (KO)

Evangelista Santos defeated Yosuke Nishijima
(rear naked choke)

Pride 32

10/21/06

Thomas & Mack Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Mark
Coleman (arm bar)

Other Fights:

Mauricio Rua defeated Kevin Randleman (knee bar)

Josh Barnett defeated Pawel Nastula (toe hole)

Eric Esch defeated Sean O'Haire (TKO)

Dan Henderson defeated Vitor Belfort (decision)

Phil Baroni defeated Yosuke Nishijima (Kimura)

Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Travis Galbraith
(TKO)

Robbie Lawler defeated Joey Villaseñor (KO)

Pride Bushido 13

11/5/06

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Kazuo Misaki defeated Denis Kang
(decision, won Pride Welterweight Grand Prix)

Other Fights:

Takanori Gomi defeated Marcus Aurelio (decision)

Shinya Aoki defeated Clay French (triangle choke)

Mitsuhiro Ishida defeated David Bielkheden
(decision)

Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Mike Plotcheck
(decision)

Sanae Kikuta defeated Jean-Francois Lenogue
(decision)

Joe Pearson defeated Yoshiro Maeda (guillotine
choke)

Luiz Firmino defeated Nobuhiro Obiia (decision)

Murilo Bustamante defeated Yoon Dong Sik
(decision)

Denis Kang defeated Akihiro Gono (decision)

Paulo Filho defeated Kazuo Misaki (arm bar)

Gegard Mousasi defeated Hector Lombard
(decision)

Pride Shockwave 2006

12/31/06

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Fedor Emelianenko defeated Mark Hunt
(Kimura)

Other Fights:

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira defeated Josh Barnett
(decision)

James Thompson defeated Hidehiko Yoshida (TKO)

Takanori Gomi defeated Mitsuhiro Ishida (TKO)

Kazuyuki Fujita defeated Eldar Kurtanidze
(submission to strikes)

Gilbert Melendez defeated Tatsuya Kawajiri
(decision)

Mauricio Rua defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura
(decision)

Akihiro Gono defeated Yuki Kondo (decision)

Shinya Aoki defeated Joachim Hansen (gogoplata)

Kiyoshi Tamura defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (KO)

Pride 33

2/24/07

Thomas & Mack Center (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Main Event: Dan Henderson defeats Wanderlei Silva
(KO, won Pride Middleweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Nick Diaz vs. Takanori Gomi (no contest)

Mauricio Rua defeated Alistair Overeem (KO)

Sergei Kharitonov defeated Mike Russow (arm
bar)

Hayato Sakurai defeated Mac Danzig (KO)

Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou defeated Antonio
Rogerio Nogueira (KO)

James Lee defeated Travis Wiuff (guillotine choke)
Frank Trigg defeated Kazuo Misaki (decision)
Joachim Hansen defeated Jason Ireland (arm bar)

Pride 34

4/8/07

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Jeff Monson defeated Kazuyuki Fujita
(rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou defeated Ricardo Arona (KO)
Shinya Aoki defeated Brian Lo-An-Joe (arm bar)
James Thompson defeated Don Frye (TKO)
Gilbert Yvel defeated Akira Shoji (TKO)
Makoto Takimoto defeated Zelg Galesic (arm bar)
Eric Esch defeated Zuluzinho (key lock)
Yoshihiro Nakao defeated Edson Drago (neck crank)

YARENNOKA

Yarennoka

12/31/07

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Shinya Aoki defeated Jung Bu-Kyung
(decision)

Other Fights:

Hayato Sakurai defeated Hidehiko Hasegawa
(decision)
Fedor Emelianenko defeated Hong-Man Choi (arm bar)
Kazuo Misaki vs. Yoshihiro Akiyama (no contest)
Mitsuhiro Ishida defeated Gilbert Melendez
(decision)
Makoto Takimoto defeated Murilo Bustamante
(decision)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Luiz Azeredo (decision)
Mike Russow defeated Roman Zentsov (north-south choke)

DREAM

Dream 1

3/15/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Shinya Aoki vs. Gesias Cavalcante (no contest)

Other Fights:

Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Kultar Gill (decision)
Eddie Alvarez defeated Andre Amade (TKO)
Mirko Cro Cop defeated Tatsuya Mizuno (TKO)
Mitsuhiro Ishida defeated Jung Bu-Kyung
(decision)
Katsuhiko Nagata defeated Artur Oumakhanov
(decision)
Luis Firmino defeated Kazuyuki Miyata (rear naked choke)
Joachim Hansen defeated Kotetsu Boku (decision)
Hayato Sakurai defeated Hidetaka Monma (TKO)
Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Lee Kwan Bum (knee bar)

Dream 2

4/29/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Andrews Nakahara (neck crank)

Other Fights:

Gegard Mousasi defeated Denis Kang (triangle choke)
Kiyoshi Tamura defeated Masakatsu Funaki (TKO)
Ronaldo de Souza defeated Ian Murphy (rear naked choke)
Zelg Galesic defeated Magomed Sultanakhmedov
(arm bar)
Yoon Dong Sik defeated Sungo Oyama (decision)
Taiei Kin defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (decision)
Shinya Aoki defeated Gesias Cavalcante (decision)

Dream 3

5/11/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Caol Uno defeated Mitsuhiro Ishida (rear naked choke)

Other Fights:

Eddie Alvarez defeated Joachim Hansen (decision)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Luiz Firmino (decision)
Nick Diaz defeated Katsuya Inoue (TKO)
Daisuke Nakamura defeated Jung Bu-Kyung (KO)
Melvin Manhoef defeated Dae Won Kim (TKO)
Jason Miller defeated Katsuyori Shibata (TKO)

Takeshi Yamazaki defeated Shoji Maruyama
(decision)

Dream 4

6/15/08

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Melvin Manhoef defeated Kazushi
Sakuraba (KO)

Other Fights:

Ronaldo de Souza defeated Jason Miller
(decision)

Zelg Galesic defeated Taiei Kin (TKO)

Gegard Mousasi defeated Yoon Dong Sik (decision)

Hideo Tokoro defeated Darren Uyenoyama
(decision)

Ralek Gracie defeated Alavutdin Gadzhiyev (arm
bar)

Alistair Overeem defeated Lee Tae-Hyun (KO)

Shinya Aoki defeated Katsuhiko Nagata
(gogoplata)

Dream 5

7/21/08

Osaka-jo Hall (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Joachim Hansen defeated Shinya Aoki
(TKO, won Dream Lightweight Grand Prix and Dream
Lightweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Alistair Overeem defeated Mark Hunt (key lock)

Yoshihiro Akiyama defeated Katsuyori Shibata
(Ezekiel choke)

Hideo Tokoro defeated Takeshi Yamazaki (decision)

Kuniyoshi Hironaka defeated Motoki Miyazawa
(doctor stoppage)

Joseph Benavidez defeated Junya Kudo (guillotine
choke)

Joachim Hansen defeated Kultar Gil (arm bar)

Eddie Alvarez defeated Tatsuya Kawajiri (TKO)

Shinya Aoki defeated Caol Uno (decision)

Daisuke Nakamura defeated Andy Ologun (arm
bar)

Dream 6

9/23/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Gegard Mousasi defeated Ronaldo de
Souza (KO, won Dream Middleweight Grand Prix and
Dream Middleweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Mirko Cro Cop vs. Alistair Overeem (no contest)

Shinya Aoki defeated Todd Moore (neck crank)

Yoshihiro Akiyama defeated Masanori Tonooka
(arm bar)

Hayato Sakurai defeated Kuniyoshi Hironaka
(decision)

Masakatsu Funaki defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (heel
hook)

Atsushi Yamamoto defeated Hideo Tokoro
(decision)

Sergei Kharitonov defeated Jimmy Ambriz (KO)

Keita Nakamura defeated Adriano Martins
(decision)

Ronaldo de Souza defeated Zelg Galesic (arm bar)

Gegard Mousasi defeated Melvin Manhoef
(triangle choke)

Andrews Nakahara defeated Yoon Dong Sik (TKO)

Dream 7

3/8/09

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Masakazu Imanari defeated Atsushi
Yamamoto (decision)

Other Fights:

Hiroyuki Takaya defeated Jong Won Kim (TKO)

Yoshiro Maeda defeated Micah Miller (decision)

Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Ross Ebanes (rear
naked choke)

Shinya Aoki defeated David Gardner (rear naked
choke)

Mitsuhiro Ishida defeated Daisuke Nakamura
(decision)

Abel Cullum defeated Akiyo Nishiura (decision)

Joe Warren defeated Chase Beebe (doctor
stoppage)

Bibiano Fernandes defeated Takafumi Otsuka
(decision)

Dream 8

4/5/09

Nippon Gaishi Hall (Nagoya, Japan)

Main Event: Hayato Sakurai defeated Shinya Aoki (TKO)

Other Fights:

Jason High defeated Yuya Shirai (rear naked choke)
Marius Zaromskis defeated Seichi Ikemoto (decision)
Andre Galvao defeated John Alessio (arm bar)
Daiki Hata defeated Hideo Tokoro (decision)
Jeff Monson defeated Sergei Kharitonov (north-south choke)
Riki Fukuda defeated Murilo Rua (decision)
Vitor Ribeiro defeated Katsuhiko Nagata (doctor stoppage)
Andrews Nakahara defeated Shungo Oyama (TKO)
Katsuyori Shibata defeated Ikuhisa Minowa (decision)

Dream 9

5/26/09

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Jason Miller vs. Ronaldo de Souza (no contest)

Other Fights:

Joe Warren defeated Norifumi Yamamoto (decision)
Bibiano Fernandes defeated Masakazu Imanari (decision)
Hiroyuki Takaya defeated Yoshiro Maeda (TKO)
Hideo Tokoro defeated Abel Cullum (rear naked choke)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Gesias Cavalcante (decision)
Gegard Mousasi defeated Mark Hunt (Kimura)
Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou defeated Jan Nortje (TKO)
Hong-Man Choi defeated Jose Canseco (submission to strikes)
Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Bob Sapp (Achilles lock)

Dream 10

7/20/09

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Marius Zaromskis defeated Jason High (KO, won Dream Welterweight Grand Prix)

Other Fights:

Shinya Aoki defeated Vitor Ribeiro (decision)
Jesse Taylor defeated Yoon Dong Sik (TKO)
Paulo Filho defeated Melvin Manhoef (arm bar)
Katsunori Kikuno defeated Andre Dido (TKO)
Jason High defeated Andre Galvao (decision)
Marius Zaromskis defeated Hayato Sakurai (TKO)
Tarec Saffiedine defeated Seichi Ikemoto (decision)

Dream 11

10/6/09

Yokohama Arena (Yokohama, Japan)

Main Event: Hiroyuki Takaya defeated Bibiano Fernandes (decision, won Dream Featherweight Grand Prix and Dream Featherweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Shinya Aoki defeated Joachim Hansen (arm bar, won Dream Lightweight Championship)
Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Rubin Williams (Kimura)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Melchor Manibusan (TKO)
Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou defeated Bob Sapp (TKO)
Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Hong-Man Choi (heel hook)
Bibiano Fernandes defeated Joe Warren (arm bar)
Hiroyuki Takaya defeated Hideo Tokoro (TKO)
Kazuyuki Miyata defeated D.J. Taiki (decision)

Dream 12

10/25/09

Osaka-jo Hall (Osaka, Japan)

Main Event: Alistair Overeem defeated James Thompson (guillotine choke)

Other Fights:

Eddie Alvarez defeated Katsunori Kikuno (arm triangle)
Marius Zaromskis defeated Myeon Ho Bae (KO)
Kazushi Sakuraba defeated Zelg Galesic (knee bar)
Yoon Dong Sik defeated Tarec Saffiedine (decision)

Yoshiro Maeda defeated Chase Beebe (rear naked choke)
Kuniyoshi Hironaka defeated Won Sik Park (corner stoppage)
Tomoya Miyashita defeated Keisuke Fujiwara (decision)

DYNAMITE!!

Dynamite!! 2008

(combined kickboxing/MMA event)

12/31/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

MMA Main Event: Kiyoshi Tamura defeated Kazushi Sakuraba (decision)

Other MMA Fights:

Shinya Aoki defeated Eddie Alvarez (heel hook, won WAMMA Lightweight Championship)
Melvin Manhoef defeated Mark Hunt (KO)
Mirko Cro Cop defeated Hong-Man Choi (TKO)
Hayato Sakurai defeated Katsuyori Shibata (TKO)
Semmy Schilt defeated Mighty Mo (triangle choke)
Bob Sapp defeated Akihito Tanaka (TKO)
Andy Ologun defeated Yukio Sakaguchi (KO)
Daisuke Nakamura defeated Hideo Tokoro (arm bar)
Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Errol Zimmerman (toe hold)

Dynamite!! 2009

(combined kickboxing/MMA event)

12/31/09

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

MMA Main Event: Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Satoshi Ishii (decision)

Other MMA Fights:

Shinya Aoki defeated Mizuto Hirota (hammer lock)
Gegard Mousasi defeated Gary Goodridge (TKO)
Alistair Overeem defeated Kazuyuki Fujita (KO)
Masanori Kanehara defeated Norifumi Yamamoto (decision)
Tatsuya Kawajiri defeated Kazunori Yokota (decision)
Hideo Tokoro defeated Jong Man Kim (decision)

Melvin Manhoef defeated Kazuo Misaki (TKO)
Akihiro Gono defeated Hayato Sakurai (arm bar)
Michihiro Omigawa defeated Hiroyuki Takaya (TKO)
Hiroshi Izumi defeated Katsuyori Shibata (decision)
Ikuhisa Minowa defeated Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou (TKO)

SENGOKU

Sengoku 1

Sengoku Vanguard

3/5/08

Yoyogi National Gymnasium (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Josh Barnett defeated Hidehiko Yoshida (heel hook)

Other Fights:

Takanori Gomi defeated Duane Ludwig (TKO)
Kazuo Misaki defeated Siyar Bahadurzada (guillotine choke)
Kazuyuki Fujita defeated Peter Graham (north-south choke)
Evangelista Santos defeated Makoto Takimoto (Achilles lock)
Ryo Kawamura defeated Antonio Braga Neto (decision)
Nick Thompson defeated Fabricio Monteiro (decision)

Sengoku 2

5/18/08

Ariake Coliseum (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Josh Barnett defeated Jeff Monson (decision)

Other Fights:

Roger Gracie defeated Yuki Kondo (rear naked choke)
Kevin Randleman defeated Ryo Kawamura (decision)
Yoshihiro Nakao defeated Jim York (TKO)
Jorge Santiago defeated Yuki Sasaki (arm bar)
Eiji Mitsuoka defeated Kwang Hee Lee (rear naked choke)
Mike Pyle defeated Dan Hornbuckle (triangle choke)
Satoru Kitaoka defeated Ian James Schaffa (guillotine choke)

Sengoku 3

6/8/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Hidehiko Yoshida defeated Maurice Smith (scarf hold)

Other Fights:

Travis Wiuff defeated Kazuyuki Fujita (TKO)
Kazuo Misaki defeated Logan Clark (decision)
Nick Thompson defeated Michael Costa (Kimura)
Sanae Kikuta defeated Chris Rice (arm bar)
Marcio Cruz defeated Choi Mu Bae (triangle arm bar)
Rodrigo Damm defeated Jorge Masvidal (TKO)
Fabio Silva defeated Yoshiki Takahashi (KO)

Sengoku 4

8/24/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Takanori Gomi defeated Bang Seung Hwan (decision)

Other Fights:

Frank Trigg defeated Makoto Takimoto (decision)
Satoru Kitaoka defeated Clay French (Achilles lock)
Eiji Mitsuoka defeated Rodrigo Damm (rear naked choke)
Kazunori Yokota defeated Bojan Kosednar (decision)
Mizuto Hirota defeated Ryan Schultz (KO)
Dong Yi Yang defeated Pawel Nastula (TKO)
Moise Rimbom defeated Peter Graham (rear naked choke)
Valentijn Overeem defeated Kazuo Takahasi (KO)

Sengoku 5

9/28/08

Yoyogi National Gymnasium (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Alexandre Ribeiro defeated Takashi Sugiura (TKO)

Other Fights:

Muhammed Lawal defeated Travis Wiuff (TKO)
Yuki Sasaki defeated Yuki Kondo (rear naked choke)
Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Paul Cahoon (decision)

Jorge Santiago defeated Logan Clark (arm triangle)
Siyar Bahadurzada defeated Evangelista Santos (TKO)
Kiuma Kunioku defeated A Sol Kwon (decision)
Jorge Masvidal defeated Ryan Schultz (TKO)

Sengoku 6

11/1/08

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Satoru Kitaoka defeated Kazunori Yokota (decision, won Sengoku Lightweight Grand Prix)

Other Fights:

Jorge Santiago defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (TKO)
Sergey Golyaev defeated Takanori Gomi (decision)
Muhammed Lawal defeated Fabio Silva (TKO)
Antonio Rogerio Nogueira defeated Moise Rimbom (decision)
Jorge Masvidal defeated Bang Seung Hwan (decision)
Joe Doerkson defeated Izuru Takeuchi (TKO)
Satoru Kitaoka defeated Eiji Mitsuoka (heel hook)
Kazunori Yokota defeated Mizuto Hirota (decision)
Kazuhiro Nakamura defeated Yuki Sasaki (decision)
Jorge Santiago defeated Siyar Bahadurzada (heel hook)

Sengoku Rebellion 2009

1/4/09

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Satoru Kitaoka defeated Takanori Gomi (Achilles lock, won Sengoku Lightweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Jorge Santiago defeated Kazuo Misaki (rear naked choke, won Sengoku Middleweight Championship)
Sanae Kikuta defeated Hidehiko Yoshida (decision)
Muhammed Lawal defeated Yukiya Naito (TKO)
Antonio Silva defeated Yoshihiro Nakao (TKO)
Eiji Mitsuoka defeated Sergey Golyaev (arm bar)
Choi Mu Bae defeated Dave Herman (TKO)
Maximo Blanco defeated Seigo Inoue (KO)

Hidetade Irie defeated Minoru Kato (TKO)

Sengoku 7

3/20/09

Yoyogi National Gymnasium (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Muhammed Lawal defeated Ryo Kawamura (decision)

Other Fights:

Hatsu Hioki defeated Chris Manuel (triangle arm bar)

Nam Phan defeated Hideki Kadowaki (TKO)

Jim York defeated James Thompson (KO)

Michihiro Omigawa defeated L.C. Davis (decision)

Marlon Sandro defeated Matt Jagers (arm triangle)

Masanori Kanehara defeated Jong Man Kim (decision)

Chan Sung Jung defeated Shintaro Ishiwatari (rear naked choke)

Ronnie Mann defeated Tetsuya Yamada (decision)

Nick Denis defeated Seiya Kawahara (TKO)

Sengoku 8

5/2/09

Yoyogi National Gymnasium (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Hatsu Hioki defeated Ronnie Mann (triangle choke)

Other Fight:

Michihiro Omigawa defeated Nam Phan (TKO)

Kazunori Yokota defeated Leonardo Santos (decision)

Alexandre Ribeiro defeated Kei Yamamiya (KO)

Masanori Kanehara defeated Chan Sung Jung (decision)

Marlon Sandro defeated Nick Denis (KO)

Makoto Takimoto defeated Michael Costa (heel hook)

Stanislav Nedkov defeated Travis Wiuff (KO)

Akihiko Mori defeated Maximo Blanco (DQ)

Shigeki Osawa defeated Kota Ishibashi (decision)

Hirotoishi Saito defeated Yoshitaka Abe (arm bar)

Sengoku 9

8/2/09

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Mizuto Hirota defeated Satoru Kitaoka (TKO, won Sengoku Lightweight Championship)

Other Fights:

Masanori Kanehara defeated Michihiro Omigawa (decision, won Sengoku Featherweight Grand Prix)

Kazuo Misaki defeated Kazuhiro Nakamura (guillotine choke)

Blagoi Ivanov defeated Kazuyuki Fujita (decision)

Dan Hornbuckle defeated Akihiro Gono (KO)

Eiji Mitsuoka defeated Clay French (guillotine choke)

Chan Sung Jung defeated Matt Jagers (triangle choke)

Michihiro Omigawa defeated Marlon Sandro (decision)

Hatsu Hioki defeated Masanori Kanehara (decision)

Yoshihiro Nakao defeated Mu Bae Choi (decision)

Ikuo Usuda defeated Koji Ando (decision)

Shigeki Osawa defeated Toru Harai (TKO)

Ryosuke Komori defeated Takeshi Numajiri (TKO)

Sengoku 10

9/23/09

Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

Main Event: Antz Nansen defeated Hiroshi Izumi (TKO)

Other Fights:

Antonio Silva defeated Jim York (arm triangle)

Makoto Takimoto defeated Jae Sun Lee (decision)

Kazunori Yokota defeated Ryan Schultz (KO)

Fabio Silva defeated Ryo Kawamura (corner stoppage)

Dan Hornbuckle defeated Nick Thompson (TKO)

Joe Doerkson defeated Takanori Sato (TKO)

Maximo Blanco defeated Tetsuya Yamada (TKO)

Ikuo Usuda defeated Woo Hyon Baek (TKO)

Shigeki Osawa defeated Ki Hyun Kim (decision)

Jae Hyun So defeated Ryosuke Komori (decision)

Sengoku 11

11/7/09

Ryogoku Kokugikan (Tokyo, Japan)

Main Event: Michihiro Omigawa defeated Hatsu Hioki (decision)

Other Fights:

Mamed Khalidov defeated Jorge Santiago (TKO)
Jorge Masvidal defeated Satoru Kitaoka (KO)
Tomoaki Ueyama defeated Hirokazu Konno (rear
naked choke)
Kazunori Yokota defeated Eiji Mitsuoka (decision)
Stanislav Nedkov defeated Kevin Randleman
(decision)
Akihiro Gono defeated Yoon Young Kim
(decision)
Marlon Sandro defeated Yuji Hoshino (KO)
Dave Herman defeated Jim York (KO)
Ronnie Mann defeated Shigeki Osawa (decision)
Ryota Uozumi defeated Yuichiro Yajima (arm bar)

MOST CUMULATIVE TIME FIGHTING IN A PRIDE FC RING

1. Kazushi Sakuraba: 435 minutes in 27 fights
2. Akira Shoji: 298 minutes in 23 fights
3. Igor Vovchanchyn: 295 minutes in 27 fights
4. Wanderlei Silva: 280 minutes in 28 fights
5. Daijiro Matsui: 272 minutes in 15 fights
6. Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira: 253 minutes in 21 fights
7. Dan Henderson: 211 minutes in 18 fights
8. Kazuhiro Nakamura: 210 minutes in 17 fights
9. Heath Herring: 178 minutes in 17 fights
10. Mirko Cro Cop: 175 minutes in 24 fights
11. Alexander Otsuka: 163 minutes in 12 fights
12. Murilo Rua: 158 minutes in 13 fights
13. Quinton Jackson: 156 minutes in 17 fights
14. Ricardo Arona: 156 minutes in 12 fights
15. Renzo Gracie: 152 minutes in 8 fights
16. Daiju Takase: 135 minutes in 9 fights
17. Gary Goodridge: 133 minutes in 19 fights
18. Guy Mezger: 130 minutes in 10 fights
19. Antonio Rogerio Nogueira: 130 minutes in 10 fights
20. Fedor Emelianenko: 129 minutes in 15 fights
21. Royce Gracie: 125 minutes in 3 fights
22. Hidehiko Yoshida: 123 minutes in 12 fights
23. Ikuhisa Minowa: 122 minutes in 17 fights
24. Akihiro Gono: 115 minutes in 9 fights
25. Kazuo Misaki: 115 minutes in 8 fights

MOST FIGHTS IN A PRIDE FC RING

Wanderlei Silva: 28 fights (22-4-2)
Kazushi Sakuraba: 27 fights (18-8-1)
Igor Vovchanchyn: 27 fights (18-8-1)
Mirko Cro Cop: 24 fights (18-4-2)
Akira Shoji: 23 fights (9-12-2)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira: 21 fights (17-3-1)
Gary Goodridge: 19 fights (10-9-0)
Dan Henderson: 18 fights (13-5-0)
Quinton Jackson: 17 fights (12-5-0)
Kazuhiro Nakamura: 17 fights (11-6-0)
Ikuhisa Minowa: 17 fights (9-8-0)
Heath Herring: 17 fights (12-5-0)
Takanori Gomi: 15 fights (13-1-1)
Fedor Emelianenko: 15 fights (14-0-1)
Daijiro Matsui: 15 fights (5-8-2)
Alistair Overeem: 14 fights (7-7-0)

LONGEVITY IN PRIDE FC

Akira Shoji: 10 years = 2.3 fights/year
Wanderlei Silva: 9 years = 3.1 fights/year
Kazushi Sakuraba: 8 years = 3.4 fights/year
Igor Vovchanchyn: 8 years = 3.4 fights/year
Dan Henderson: 8 years = 2.3 fights/year
Gary Goodridge: 7 years = 2.7 fights/year
Mark Coleman: 7 years = 1.9 fights/year
Alexander Otsuka: 7 years = 1.7 fights/year
Renzo Gracie: 7 years = 1.1 fights/year
Mirko Cro Cop: 6 years = 4 fights/year
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira: 6 years = 3.5 fights/year
Quinton Jackson: 6 years = 2.8 fights/year
Alistair Overeem: 6 years = 2.3 fights/year
Murilo Rua: 6 years = 2.2 fights/year
Ricardo Arona: 6 years = 2 fights/year
Antonio Rogerio Nogueira: 6 years = 1.7 fights/year
Gilbert Yvel: 6 years = 1.7 fights/year
Nobuhiko Takada: 6 years = 1.5 fights/year
Carlos Newton: 6 years = 1.5 fights/year
Mario Sperry: 6 years = 1.2 fights/year

LONGEST STREAK

Fedor Emelianenko: 8 wins, no contest, 6 wins

BEGIN: Pride 21 (6/23/02)

END: Pride Final Conflict 2004 (8/15/04)

Fedor won 8 matches in a row at Pride before finally going to a no contest with Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira at Pride Final Conflict 2004 due to "No Contest – Accidental Cut." You could consider his streak 14 wins at Pride.

In Pride, he defeated Semmy Schilt, Heath Herring, Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira, Kazuyuki Fujita, Gary Goodridge, Mark Coleman, Kevin Randleman, Naoya Ogawa, Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira, Tsuyoshi Kohsaka, Mirko Cro Cop, Wagner da Conceicao Martins (Son of Zulu), Mark Coleman, and Mark Hunt.

Wanderlei Silva: 4 wins, draw, 6 wins, draw, 8 wins

BEGIN: Pride 7 (9/12/99)

END: Pride 28 (10/31/04)

Between 9/12/99 (Pride 7) and 10/31/04 (Pride 28), Silva never lost a match.

He had two draws with Gilbert Yvel and Mirko Cro Cop but defeated Carl Greco, Daijiro Matsui, Bob Schrijber, Guy Mezger, Dan Henderson, Kazushi Sakuraba (twice), Shungo Oyama, Kazushi Sakuraba, Alexander Otsuka, Kiyoshi Tamura, Tatsuya Iwasaki, Hiromitsu Kanehara, Hidehiko Yoshida, Quinton Jackson (twice), Ikuhisa Minowa, and Yuki Kondo.

Finally, he was stopped by Mark Hunt via split decision at Pride Shockwave 2004.

Takanori Gomi: 10 wins

BEGIN: Pride Bushido 2 (2/15/04)

END: Pride Shockwave 2005 (12/31/05)

Paulo Filho: 8 wins

BEGIN: Pride 22 (9/29/02)

END: Pride Bushido 13 (11/5/06)

Mauricio Rua: 8 wins

BEGIN: Pride Bushido 1 (10/5/03)

END: Pride Final Conflict 2005 (8/28/05)

Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira: 7 wins

BEGIN: Pride 15 (7/29/01)

END: Pride 24 (12/23/02)

Antonio Rogerio Nogueira: 7 wins

BEGIN: Pride 20 (4/28/02)

END: Pride Total Elimination 2005 (4/23/05)

Mirko Cro Cop: 7 wins

BEGIN: Pride Bushido 3 (5/23/04)

END: Pride Critical Countdown 2005 (6/26/05)

Gilbert Yvel: 6 losses

BEGIN: Pride 12 (12/9/00)

END: Pride Total Elimination Absolute (5/5/06)

Yuki Kondo: 6 losses

BEGIN: Pride Final Conflict 2004 (8/15/04)

END: Pride Shockwave 2006 (12/31/06)

MOST DAYS BETWEEN FIGHTS IN PRIDE

Kimo Leopoldo: 2,805 days (Pride 1, 11/11/97: DRAW Dan Severn – Pride Bushido 8, 7/17/05: LOST Ikuhisa Minowa)

Frank Trigg: 2,652 days (Pride 8, 11/21/99: WON Fabiano Iha – Pride 33, 2/24/07: WON Kazuo Misaki)

Ricardo Morais: 1,960 days (Pride 8, 11/21/99: LOST Mark Coleman – Pride Bushido 6, 4/3/05: LOST Aleksander Emelianenko)

MOST MATCHES ENDING IN A KO/TKO

Wanderlei Silva: 17 matches (15 wins + 2 losses)

Mirko Cro Cop: 14 matches (13 wins + 1 loss)

Kazushi Sakuraba: 11 matches (4 wins + 7 losses)

Gary Goodridge: 11 matches (7 wins + 4 losses)

Quinton Jackson: 10 matches (7 wins + 3 losses)

Mauricio Rua: 10 matches (9 wins + 1 loss)

Igor Vovchanchyn: 10 matches (9 wins + 1 loss)

Ikuhisa Minowa: 8 matches (2 wins + 6 losses)

Dan Henderson: 8 matches (8 wins)

Alistair Overeem: 8 matches (4 wins + 4 losses)

Takanori Gomi: 7 matches (7 wins)

Akira Shoji: 7 matches (2 wins + 5 losses)

James Thompson: 7 matches (5 wins + 2 losses)

Heath Herring: 7 matches (5 wins + 2 losses)

MOST MATCHES ENDING IN A SUBMISSION

Kazushi Sakuraba: 11 matches (11 wins)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira: 11 matches (11 wins)
Igor Vovchanchyn: 7 matches (3 wins + 4 losses)
Fedor Emelianenko: 7 matches (7 wins)
Nobuhiko Takada: 6 matches (2 wins + 4 losses)
Mark Coleman: 6 matches (2 wins + 4 losses)
Josh Barnett: 6 matches (4 wins + 2 losses)
Hidehiko Yoshida: 6 matches (6 wins)
Heath Herring: 6 matches (5 wins + 1 loss)

MOST MATCHES ENDING IN A DECISION

Kazuhiro Nakamura: 9 matches (7 wins + 2 losses)
Igor Vovchanchyn: 9 matches (6 wins + 3 losses)
Akira Shoji: 9 matches (4 wins + 5 losses)
Wanderlei Silva: 8 matches (6 wins + 2 losses)
Dan Henderson: 8 matches (5 wins + 3 losses)
Daijiro Matsui: 8 matches (3 wins + 5 losses)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira: 8 matches (5 wins + 3 losses)
Kazuo Misaki: 7 matches (4 wins + 3 losses)
Ricardo Arona: 6 matches (5 wins + 1 loss)
Murilo Rua: 6 matches (2 wins + 4 losses)
Murilo Bustamante: 6 matches (2 wins + 4 losses)
Daiju Takase: 6 matches (3 wins + 3 losses)

MOST MATCHES ENDING IN A DQ, DRAW, OR NO CONTEST

Daijiro Matsui: 4 matches (2 DQs, 2 draws)
Wanderlei Silva: 2 matches (1 draw, 1 no contest)
Mirko Cro Cop: 2 matches (2 draws)
Mark Kerr: 2 matches (1 DQ, 1 no contest)
Gilbert Yvel: 2 matches (1 DQ, 1 no contest)
Akira Shoji: 2 matches (2 draws)

AVERAGE FIGHTS PER FIGHTER

312 people fought in Pride over the 68 events: an average of 3.8 fights/person. If you look at the fighters who appeared more than once, the average is 6 fights/person.

THE WINLESS

Sadly, these fellas could not even buy a win:

0-4

Yosuke Nishijima, Valentijn Overeem, Ryuta Sakurai,
Hiromitsu Kanehara, Dong Sik Yoon

0-3

Yuhi Sano, Yoshihiro Takayama, Bob Schrijber,
Takahiro Oba, Stefan Leko, Ryuta Sakurai, Dan
Bobish, Kenichi Yamamoto, Kazuo Takahashi, Johil
de Oliveira

THEY NEVER LOST (. . . IN PRIDE!)

Fedor Emelianenko: 14-0-1
Paulo Filho: 8-0-0
Shinya Aoki: 4-0-0
Rodrigo Gracie: 4-0-0
Yushin Okami: 3-0-0
Jeremy Horn, Sokun Koh, Frank Trigg, Rickson Gracie,
Ricardo Almeida, Rameau Thierry Sokoudjou,
Kyosuke Sasaki, Gilbert Melendez: 2-0-0

PRIDE FEUDS

4-match feud

Gracie vs. Sakuraba: Kazushi Sakuraba 4-0
Pride 8: Kazushi Sakuraba d. Royler Gracie (Kimura)
Pride 10: Kazushi Sakuraba d. Renzo Gracie (Kimura)
Pride 12: Kazushi Sakuraba d. Ryan Gracie (decision)
Pride Grand Prix 2000 Finals: Kazushi Sakuraba d.
Royce Gracie (TKO)

3-match feuds

Josh Barnett vs. Mirko Cro Cop: Mirko Cro Cop 3-0 (2 submissions, 1 decision)
Antonio Rodrigo Nogueira vs. Fedor Emelianenko:
Fedor Emelianenko 2-0 (2 decisions) and one fight went no contest.
Kazushi Sakuraba vs. Wanderlei Silva: Wanderlei Silva 3-1 (via TKO/KO)

Gracie vs. Takada: Gracies 3-0

Pride 1: Rickson Gracie d. Nobuhiko Takada (submission)
Pride 4: Rickson Gracie d. Nobuhiko Takada (submission)
Pride Grand Prix 2000 Opening Round: Royce Gracie d. Nobuhiko Takada (decision)

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